


editor's choice 


A large, stylized illustration of a phoenix, a mythical bird that is reborn from its own ashes. The phoenix is depicted with large, yellow and orange wings, a red crest, and a black mask-like pattern around its eyes. It is shown in a dynamic pose, with its wings spread wide and its tail feathers fanning out. The background is a checkered floor, and there are some blue and white feathers or flames at the bottom right.

# phoenix

## KARMA

OSAMU TEZUKA

vol. 4

 [manga-go.com](http://manga-go.com)



# Phoenix

## KARMA

This fourth volume of Osamu Tezuka's acclaimed *Phoenix* saga is set in 8<sup>th</sup>-century Japan and tells the story of two men: the hideously deformed mass murderer Gao and the handsome and gifted woodcarver Akanemaru. Fate brings them together when Gao cruelly stabs Akanemaru in the arm, crippling him. They part, but their destinies remain inextricably linked as both find their spirits tested in a series of personal and professional trials. Beautifully set against the religious and political upheavals of the time, *Karma* is considered by many to be the best volume in the entire *Phoenix* series.

"Tezuka's visual imagination is as stunning as his narrative is ambitious...a work guaranteed to blow [readers'] minds."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"A milestone in manga translation."

—*The Comics Journal*



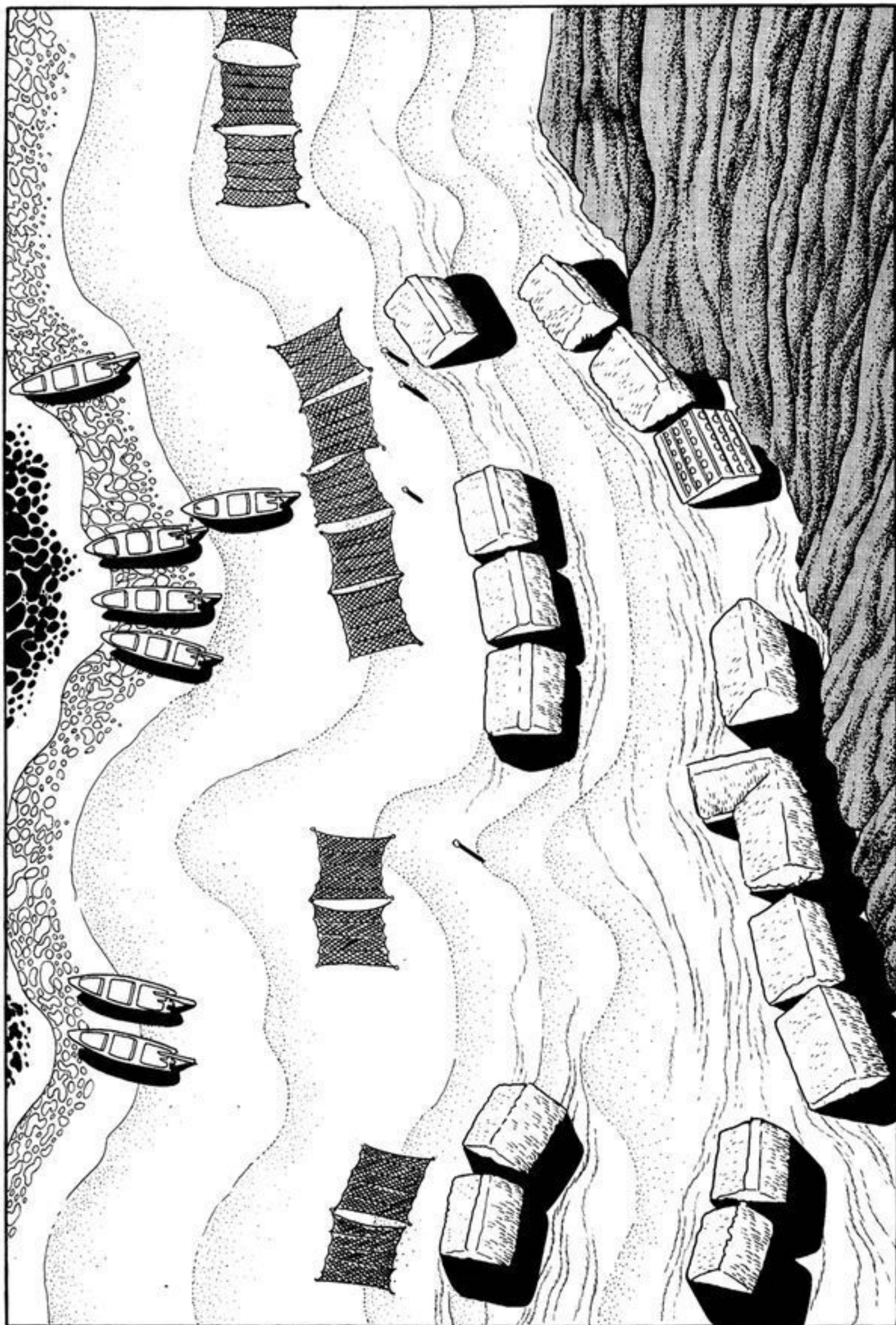
# phoenix

## KARMA



BY OSAMU TEZUKA





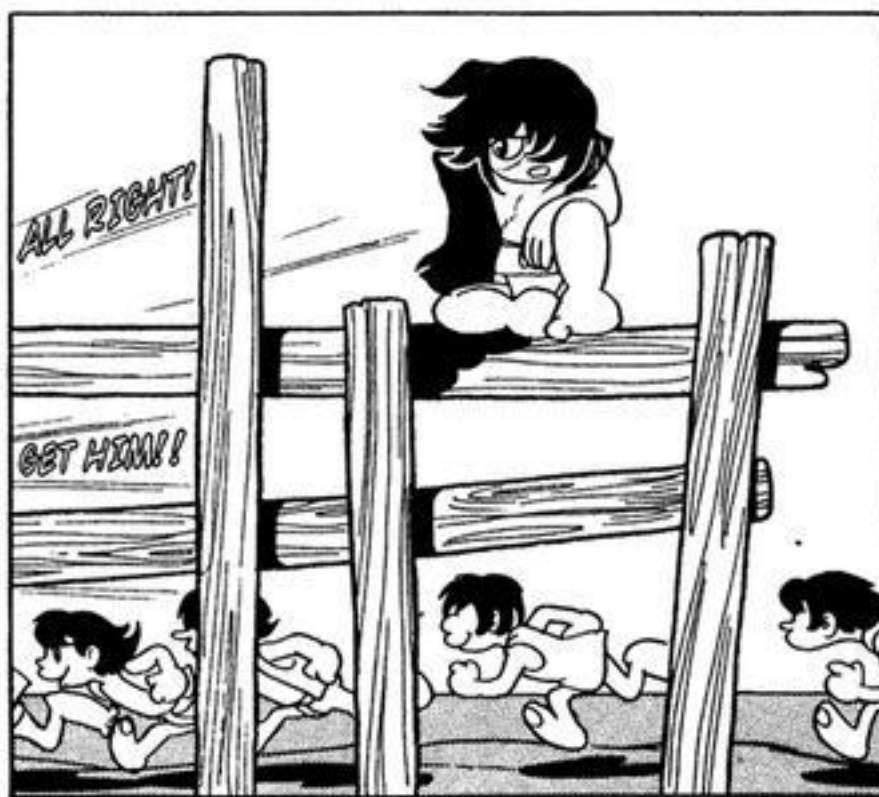
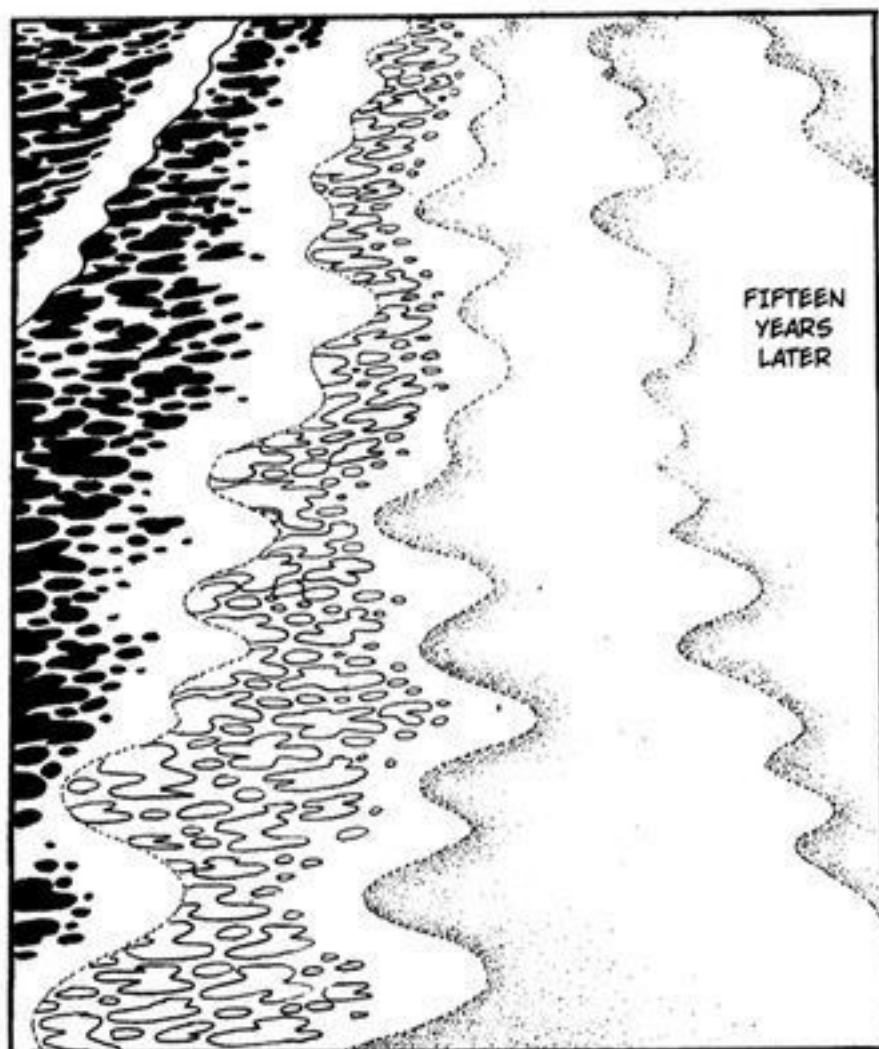
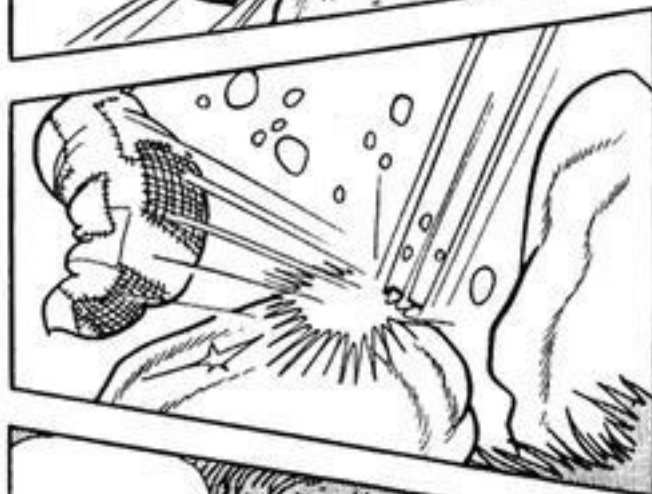








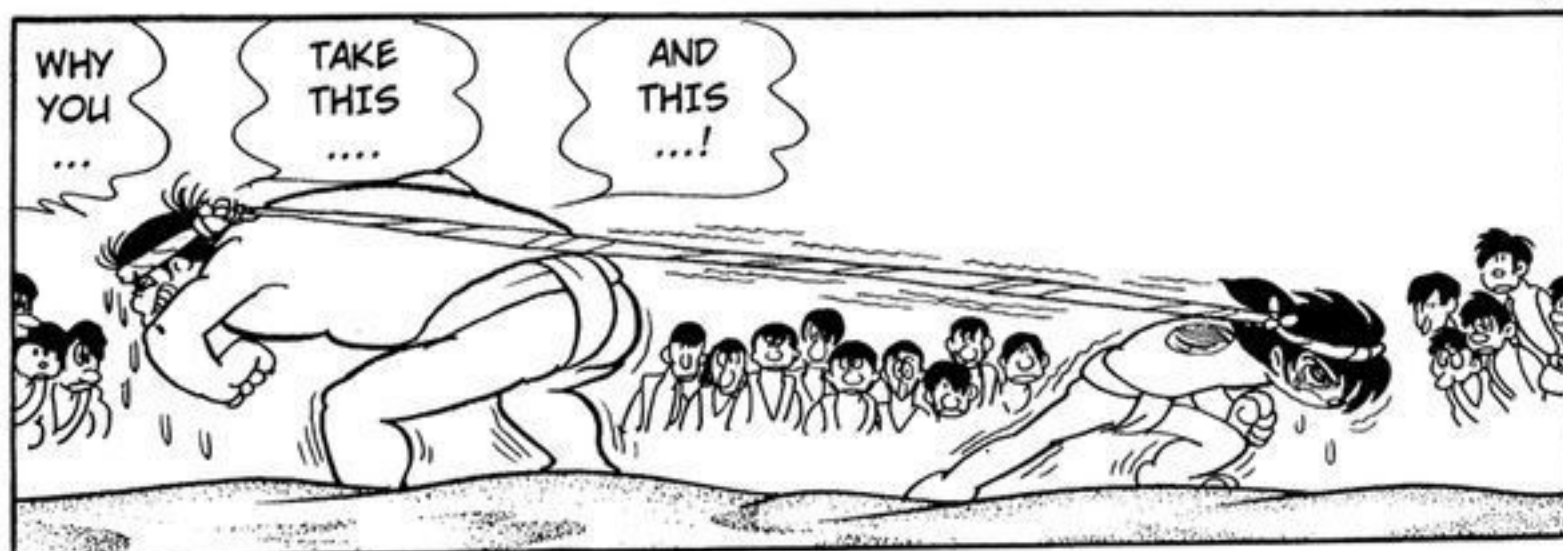
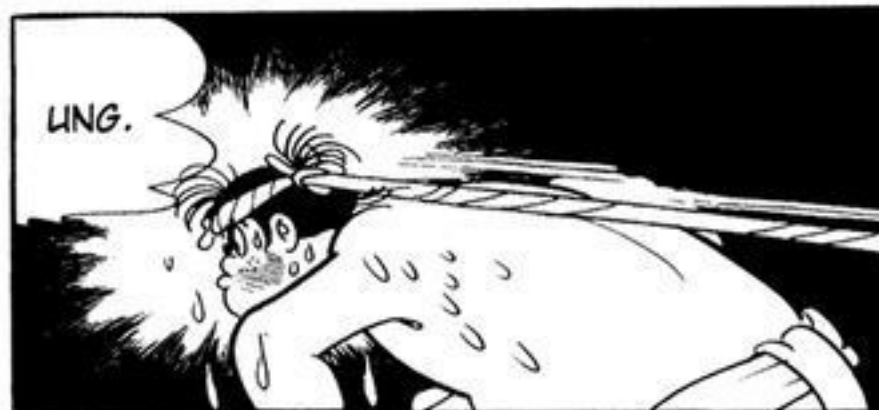
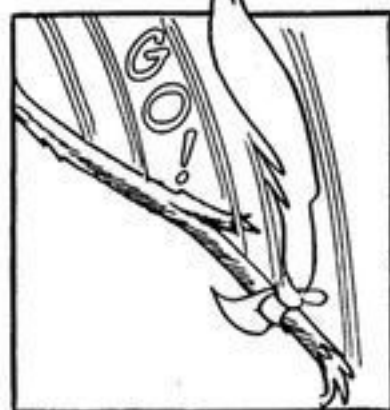
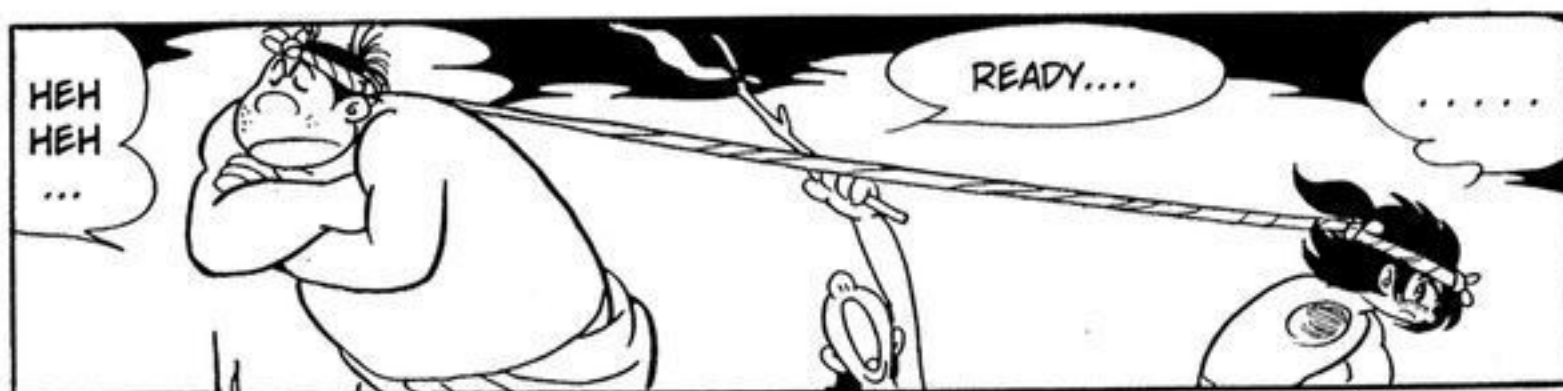




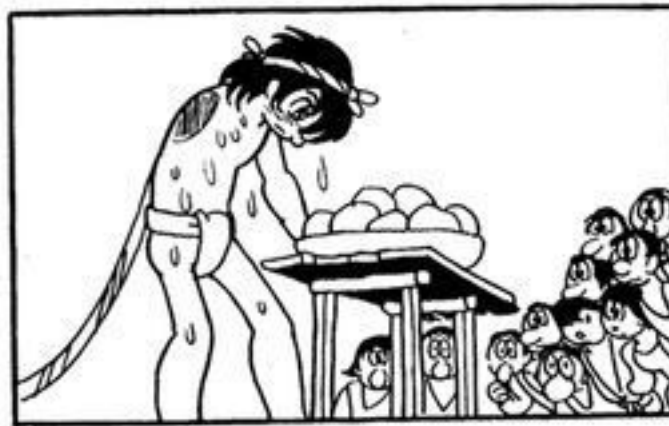
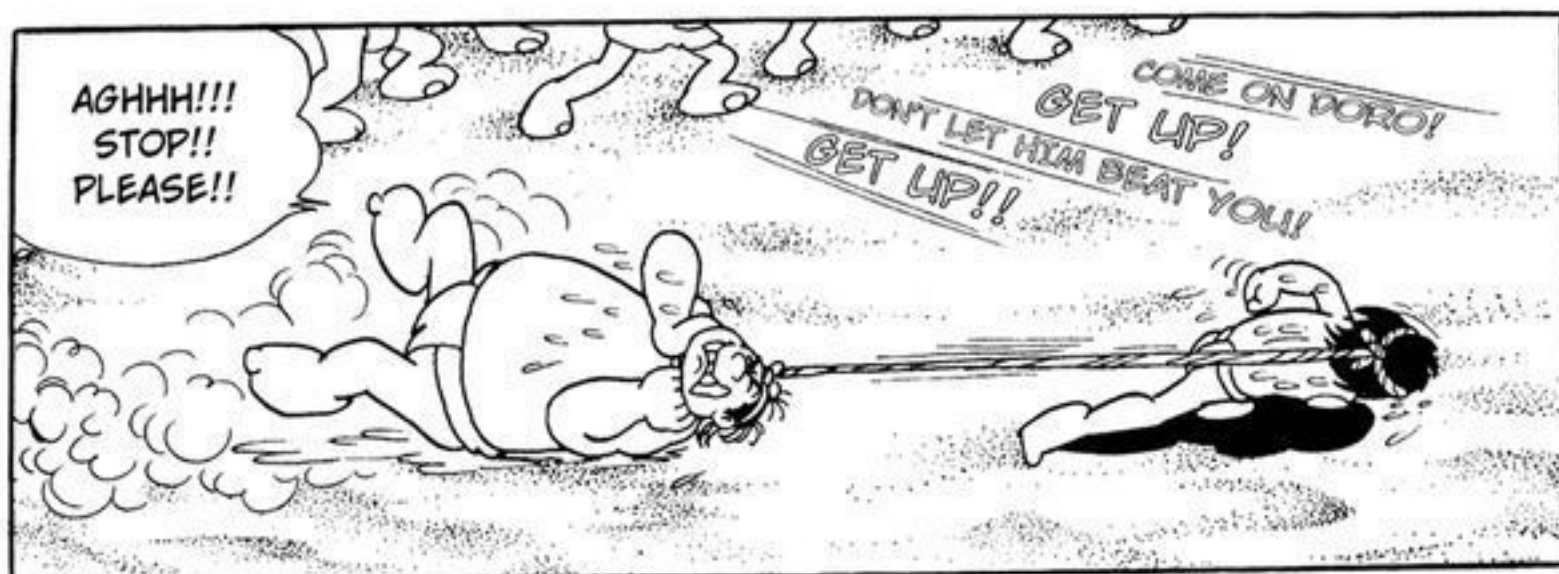




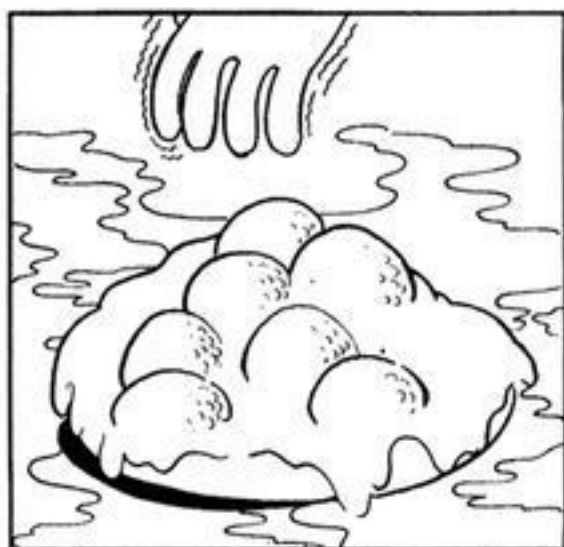








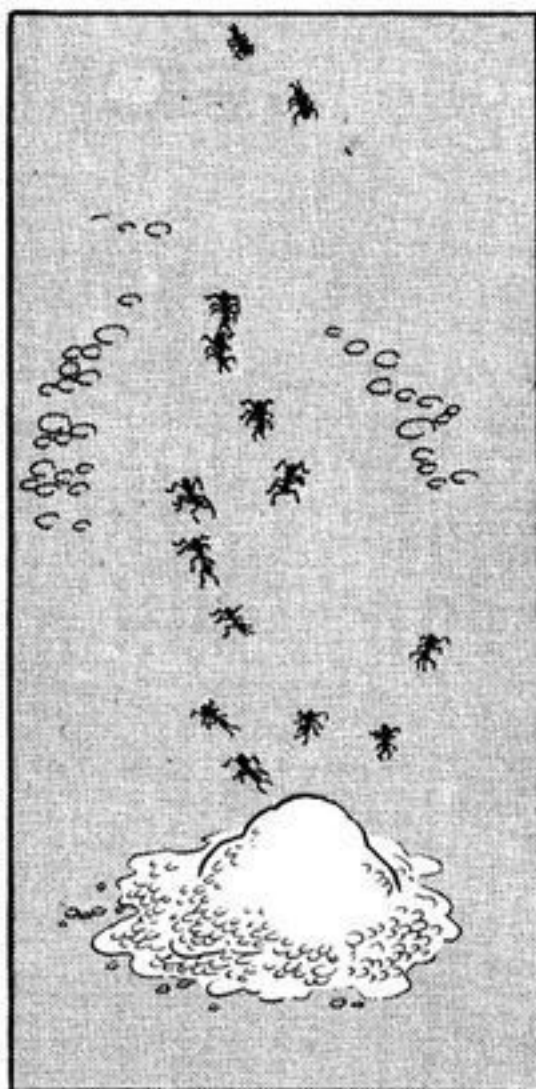




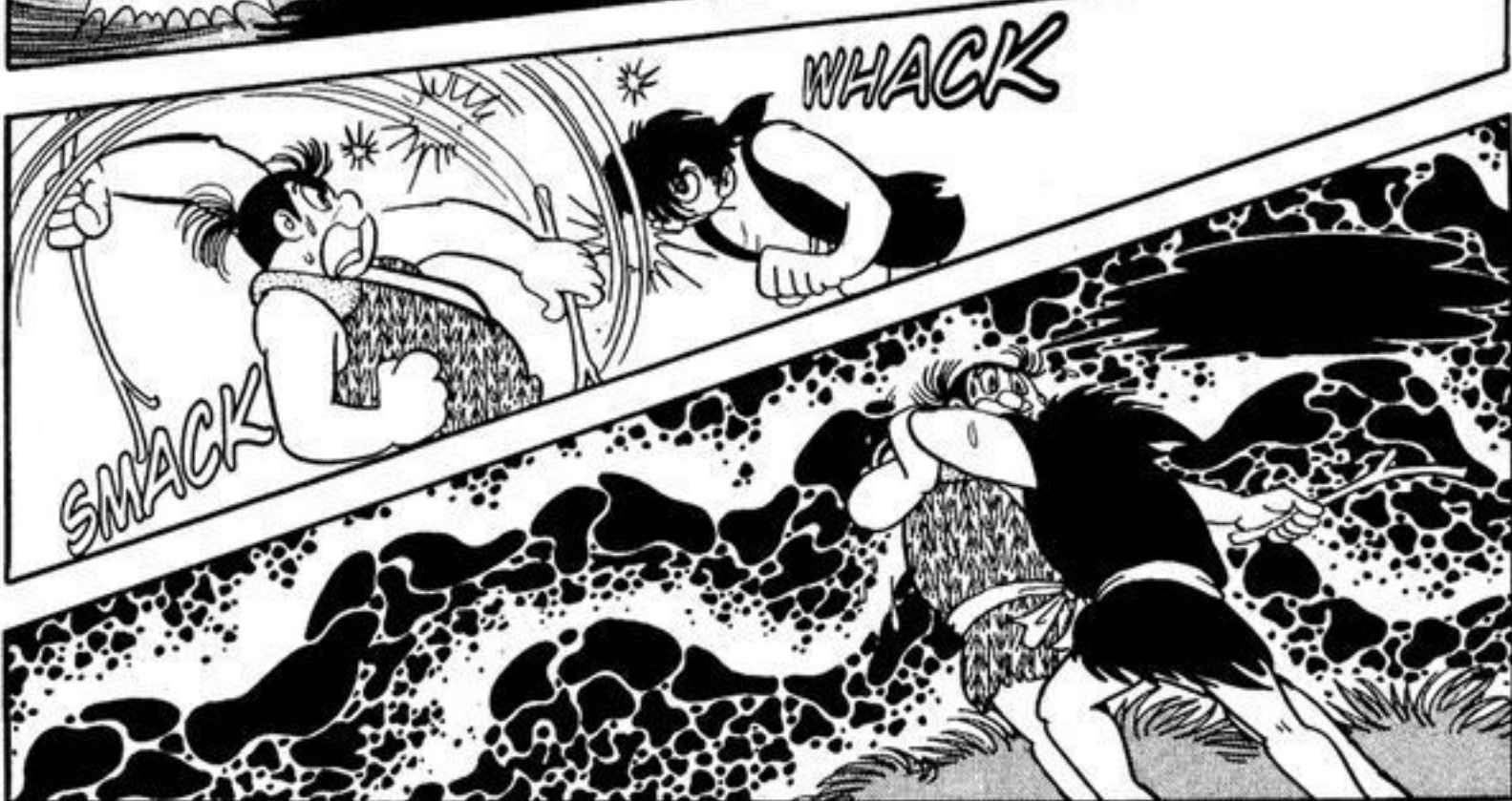
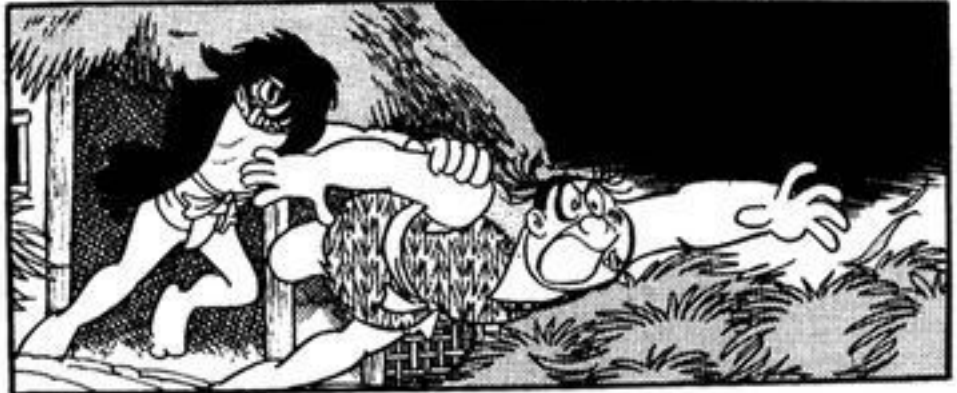












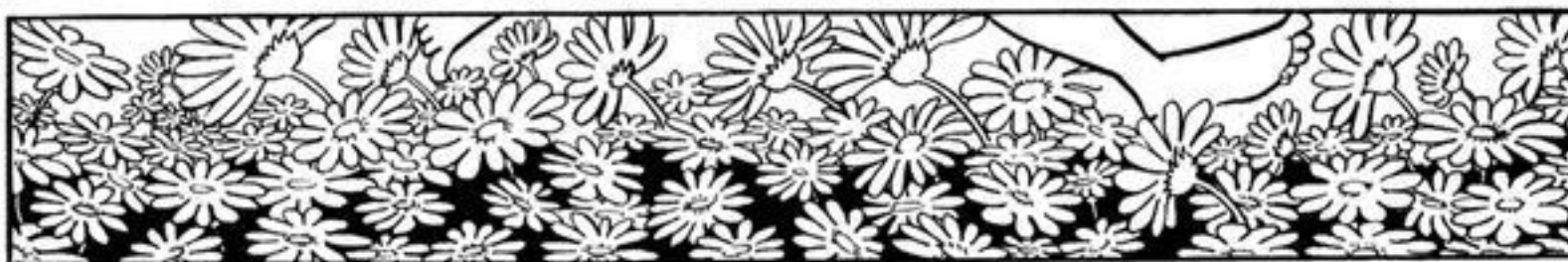
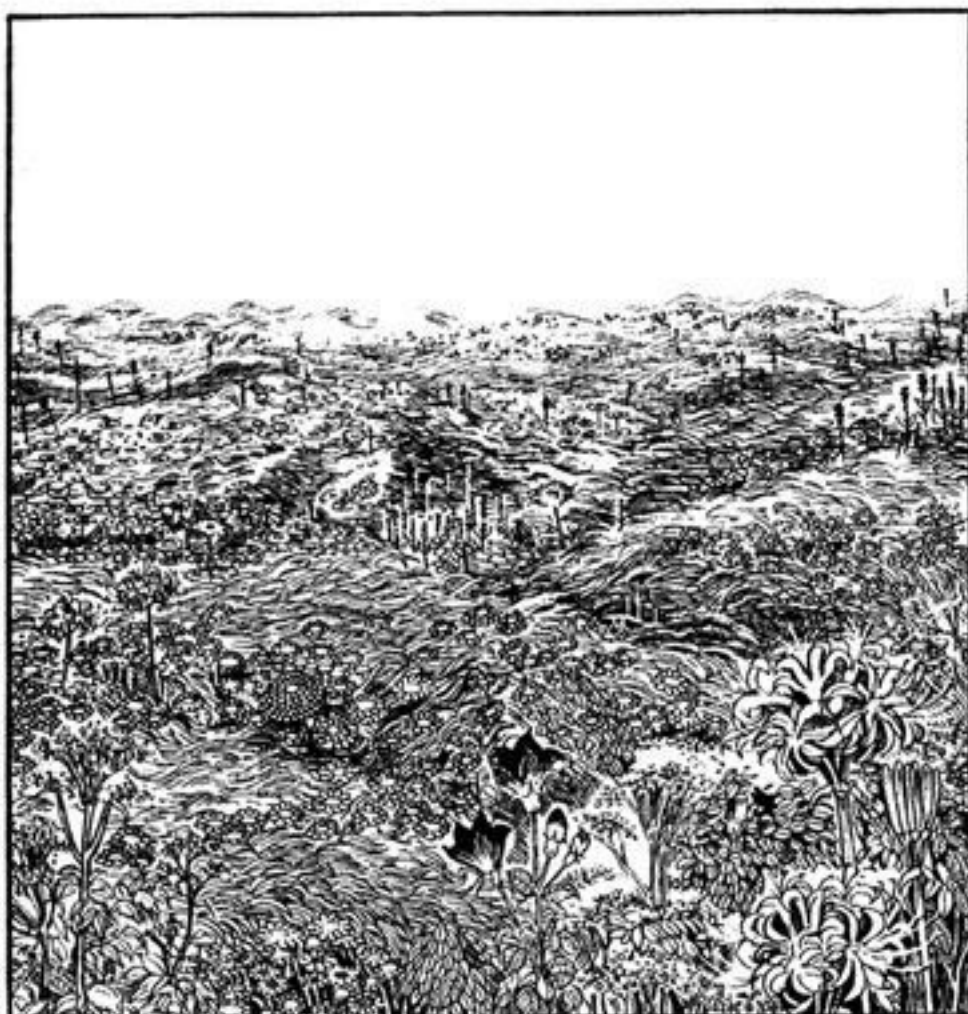
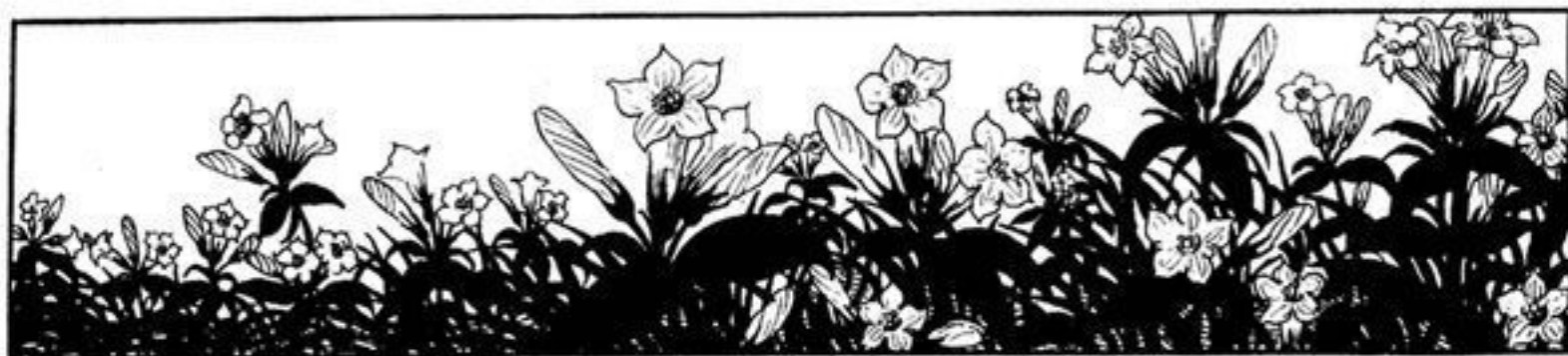




HEELLpp







GAO THREW  
THE ENTIRE  
UDAGI FAMILY  
OFF THE CLIFF!!

THE  
BOY'S A  
MONSTER!

CATCH HIM  
AND STRING  
HIM UP!!

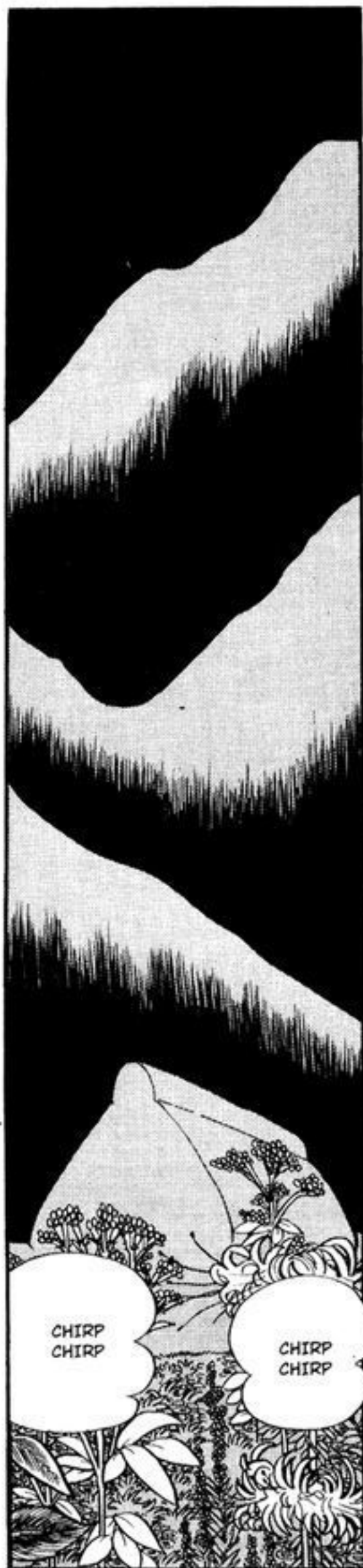
HE'S TRYING  
TO ESCAPE TO  
THE MOUNTAINS!



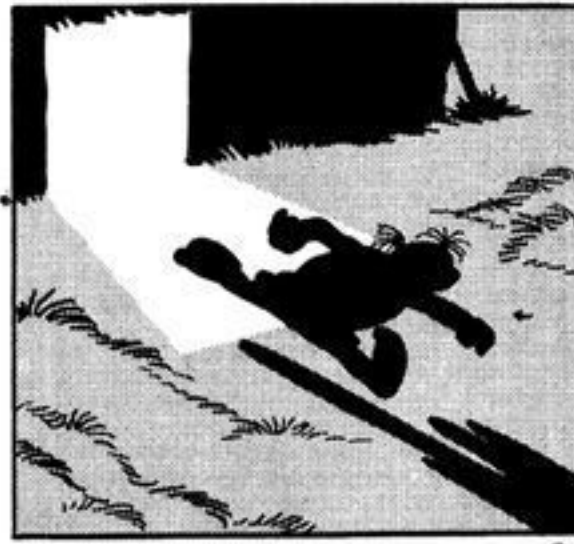
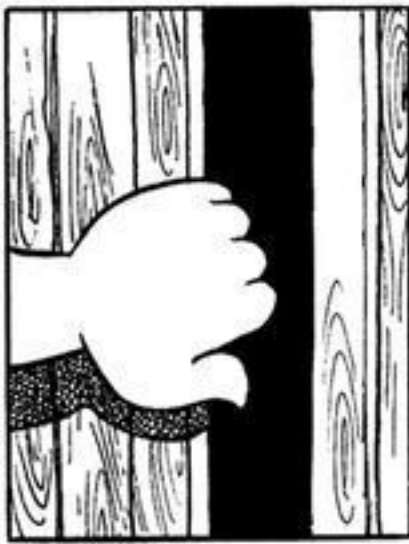
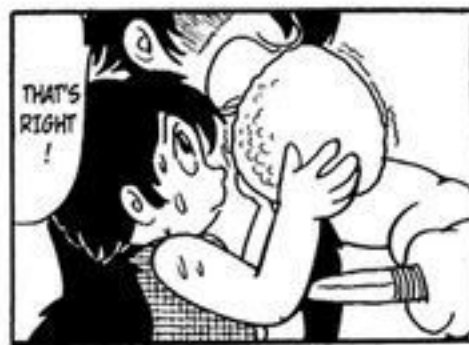








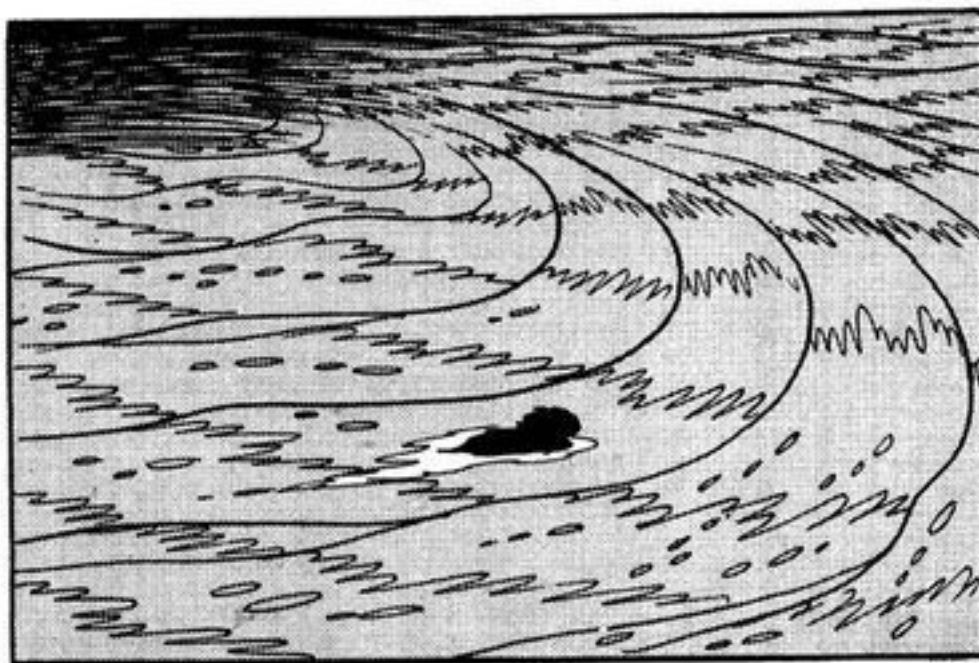




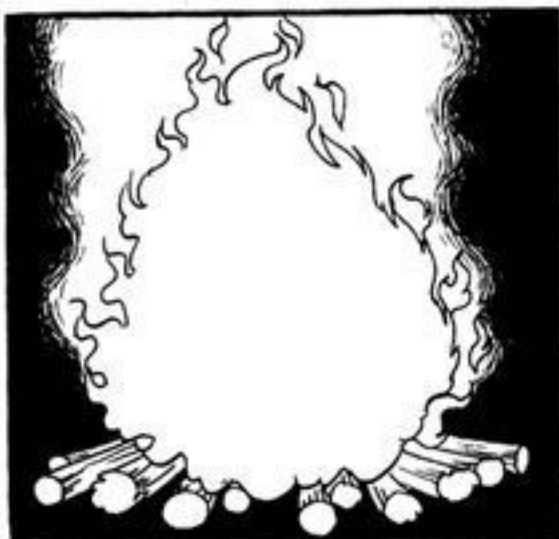
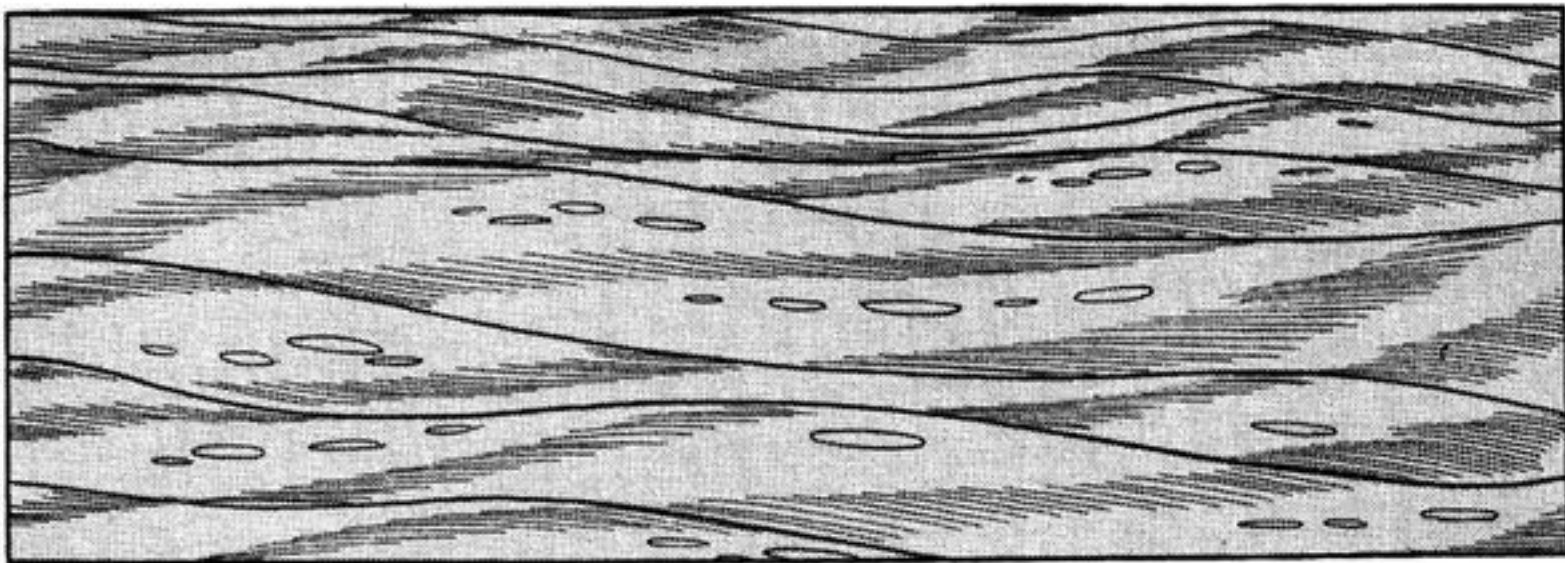








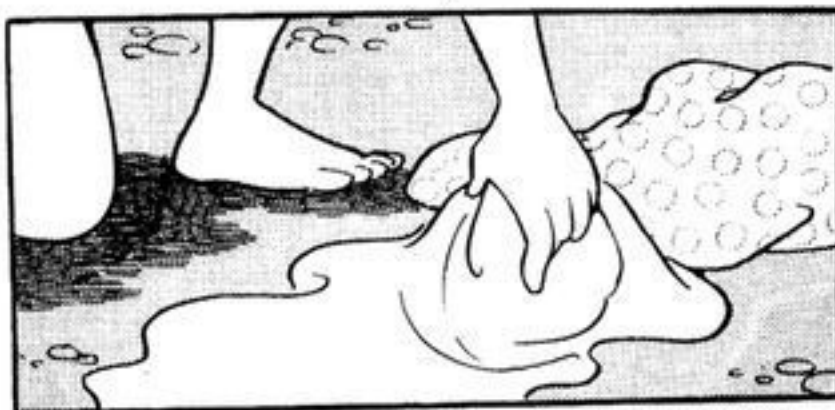




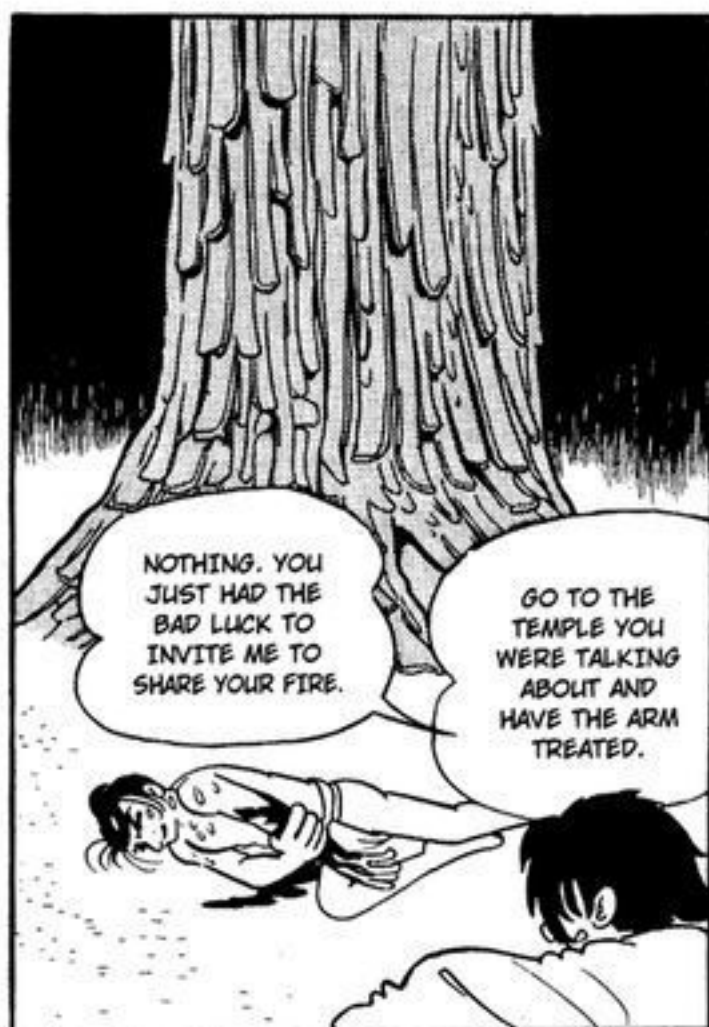




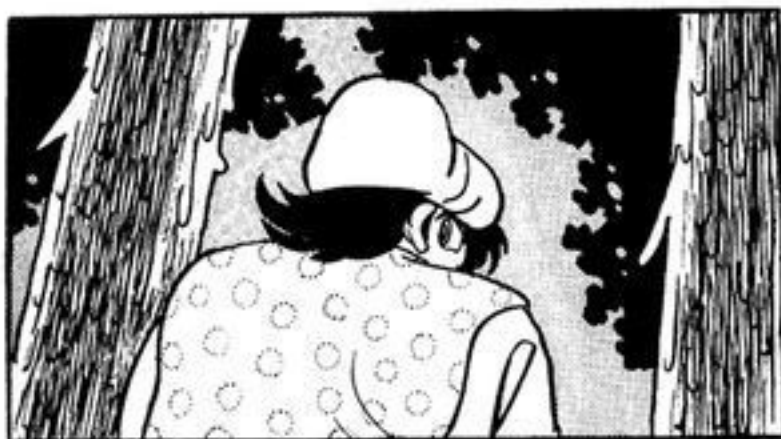
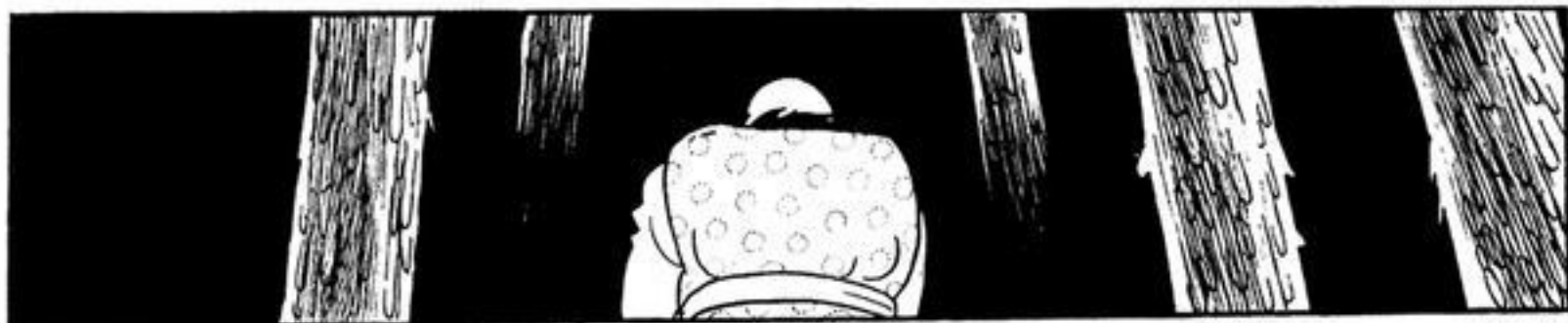




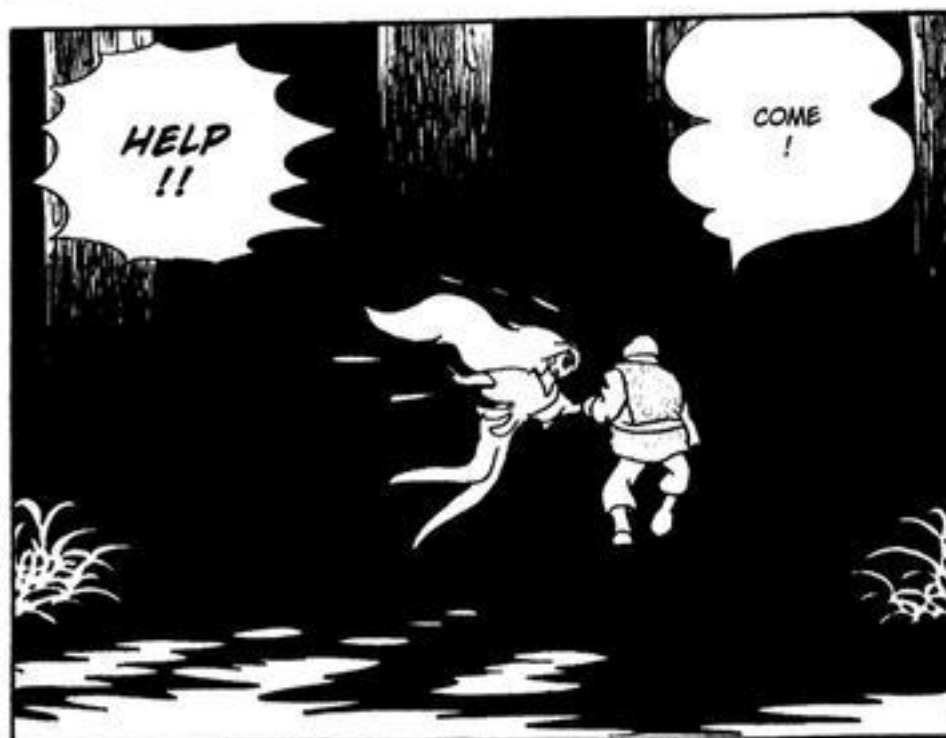
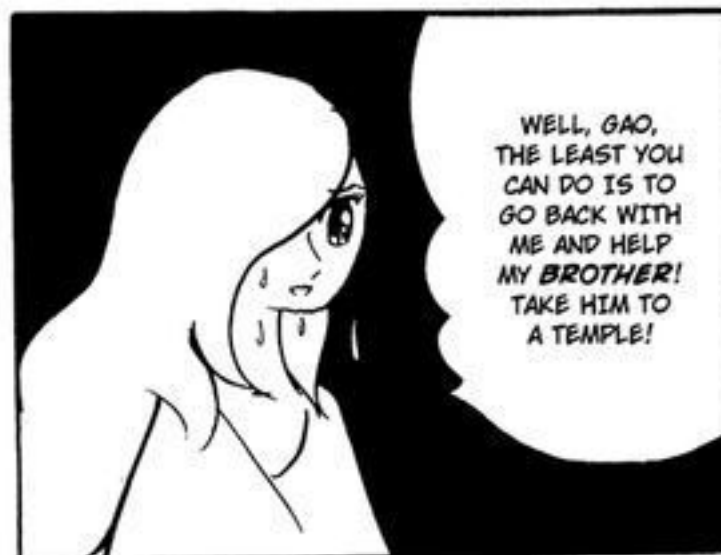




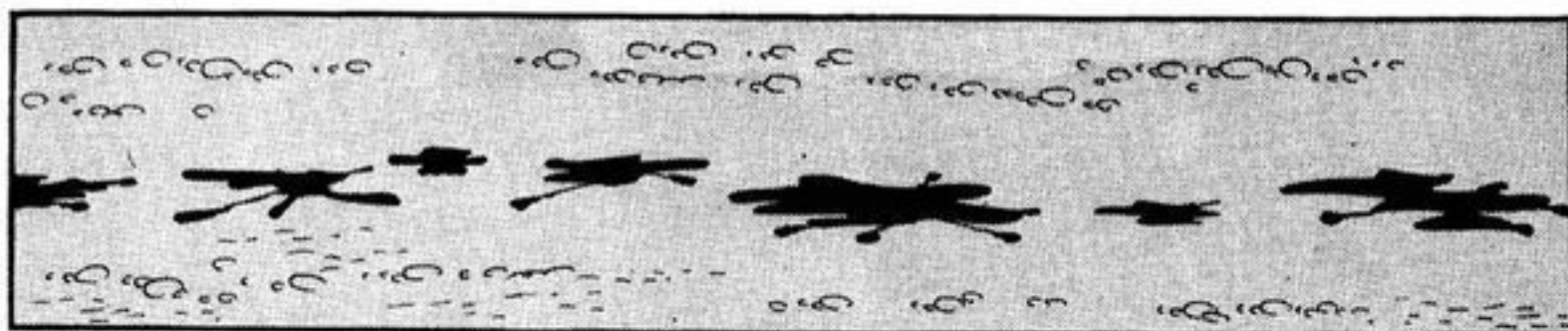




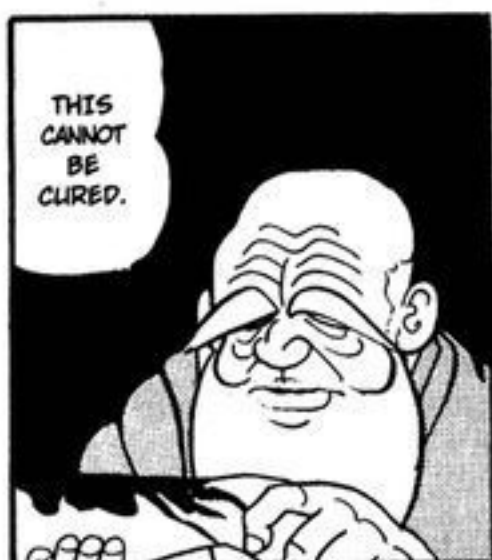
















THIS IS  
UP TO YOU.  
SHOULD  
YOU TRY,  
ANYTHING  
IS  
POSSIBLE.



I'VE SPENT  
MY WHOLE  
LIFE USING  
MY RIGHT  
HAND...

AND NO  
MATTER HOW  
HARD I TRY  
I WON'T BE  
ABLE TO  
HOLD A  
CHISEL!



LET ME  
SHOW YOU  
SOMETHING  
OF  
INTEREST,  
AKANE-  
MARU  
...

I  
HAVE  
AN  
UNUSUAL  
HOBBY.



A  
STONE  
DEER!  
IT  
ALMOST  
LOOKS  
ALIVE!



THIS IS  
EXCELLENT  
WORK!  
WHO  
CARVED  
IT?!

IT TOOK  
SEVEN  
YEARS TO  
MAKE  
THAT...  
BUT LET  
ME SHOW  
YOU  
OTHERS.



HERE.



BUT WHO  
MADE  
THESE?!

TELL  
ME  
HIS  
NAME!



THAT  
IS THE  
SCULPTOR.



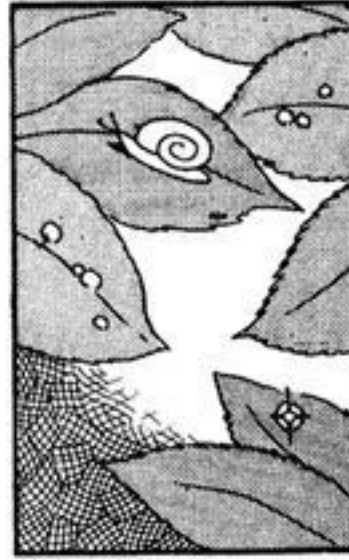
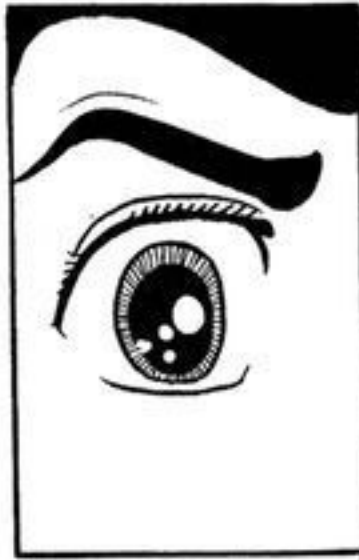
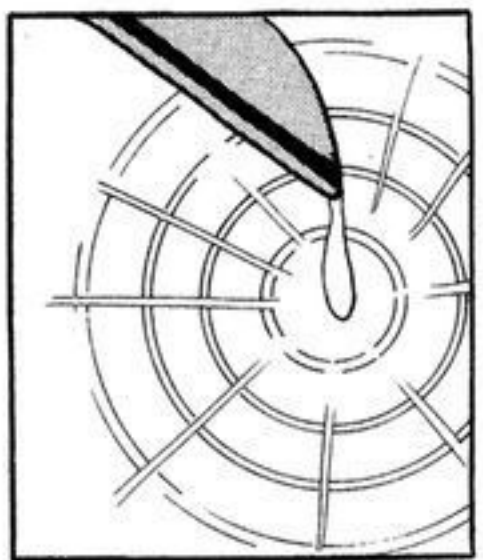
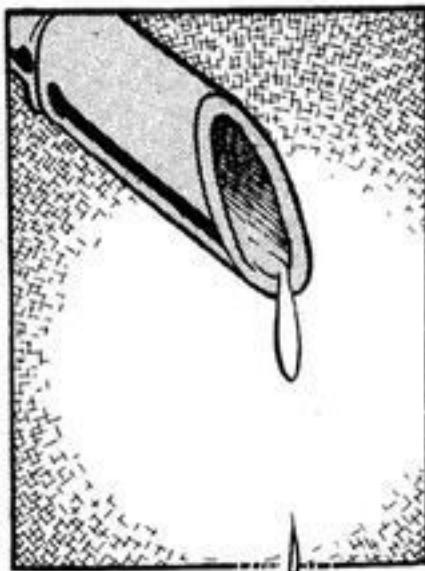
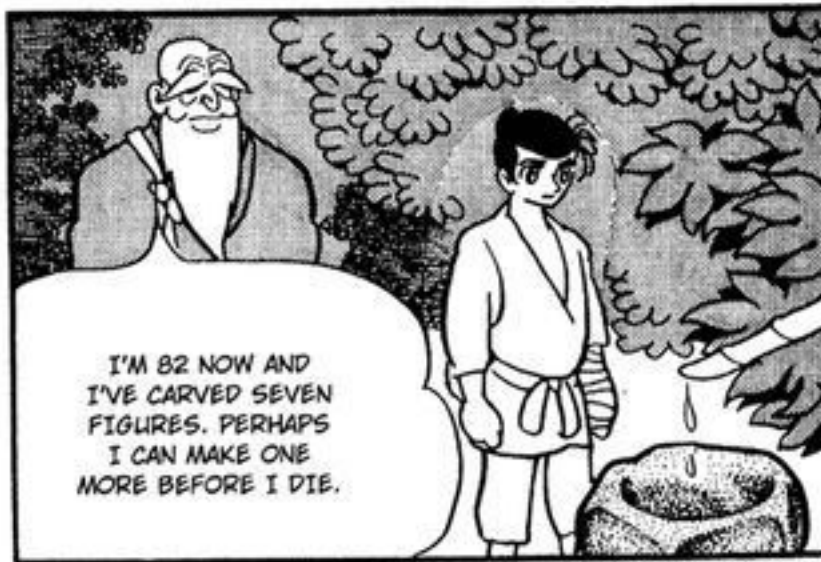
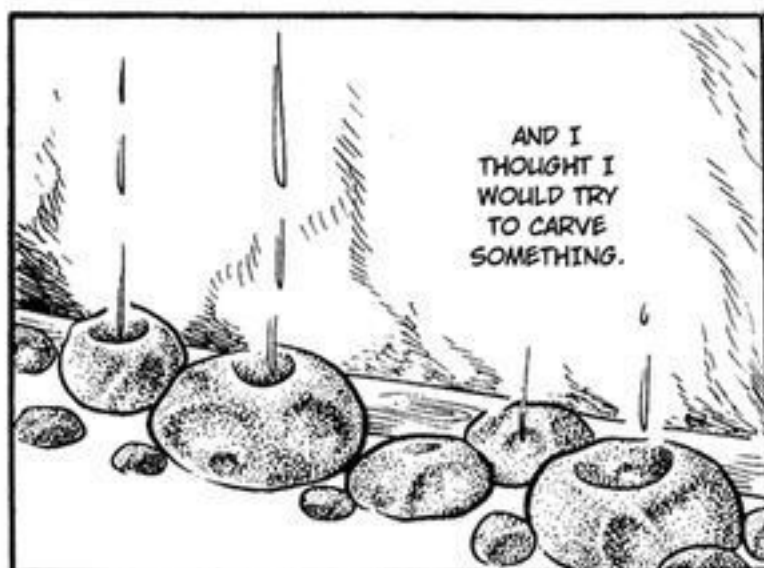
THEY  
WERE  
CARVED BY  
DROPS OF  
WATER.



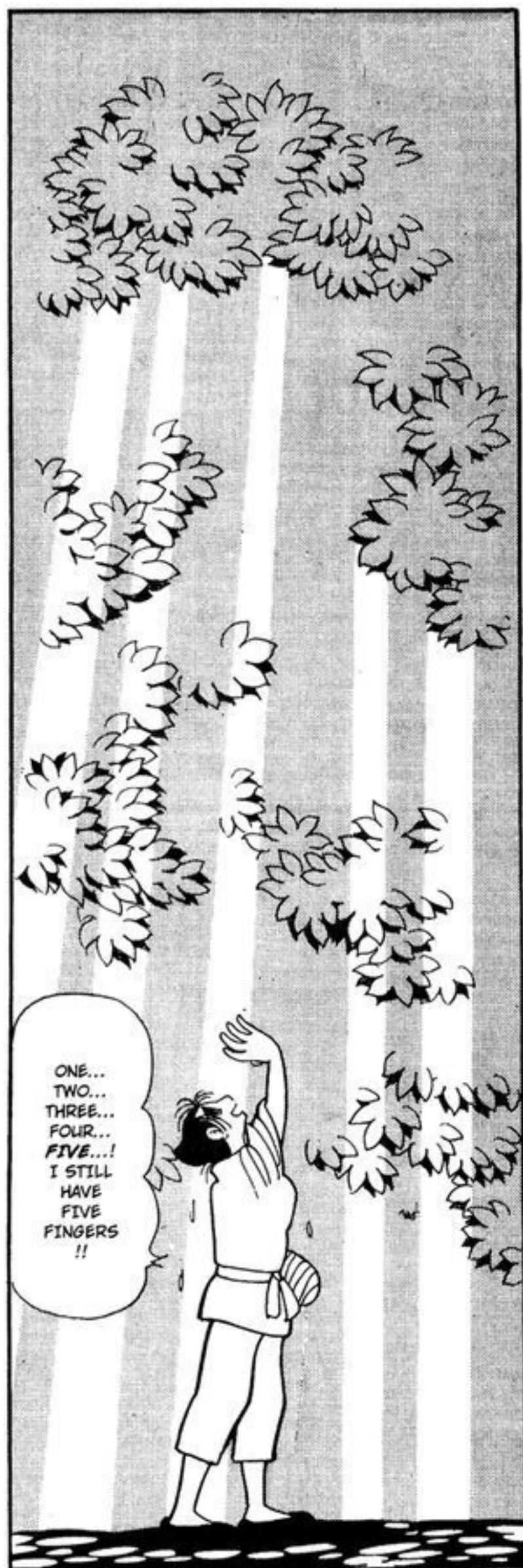
THIS IS  
SANDSTONE.  
IT'S VERY SOFT.  
WITH TIME, THE  
RAIN WEARS  
IT AWAY.

I  
DISCOVERED  
THIS WHEN  
I WAS  
TWENTY.

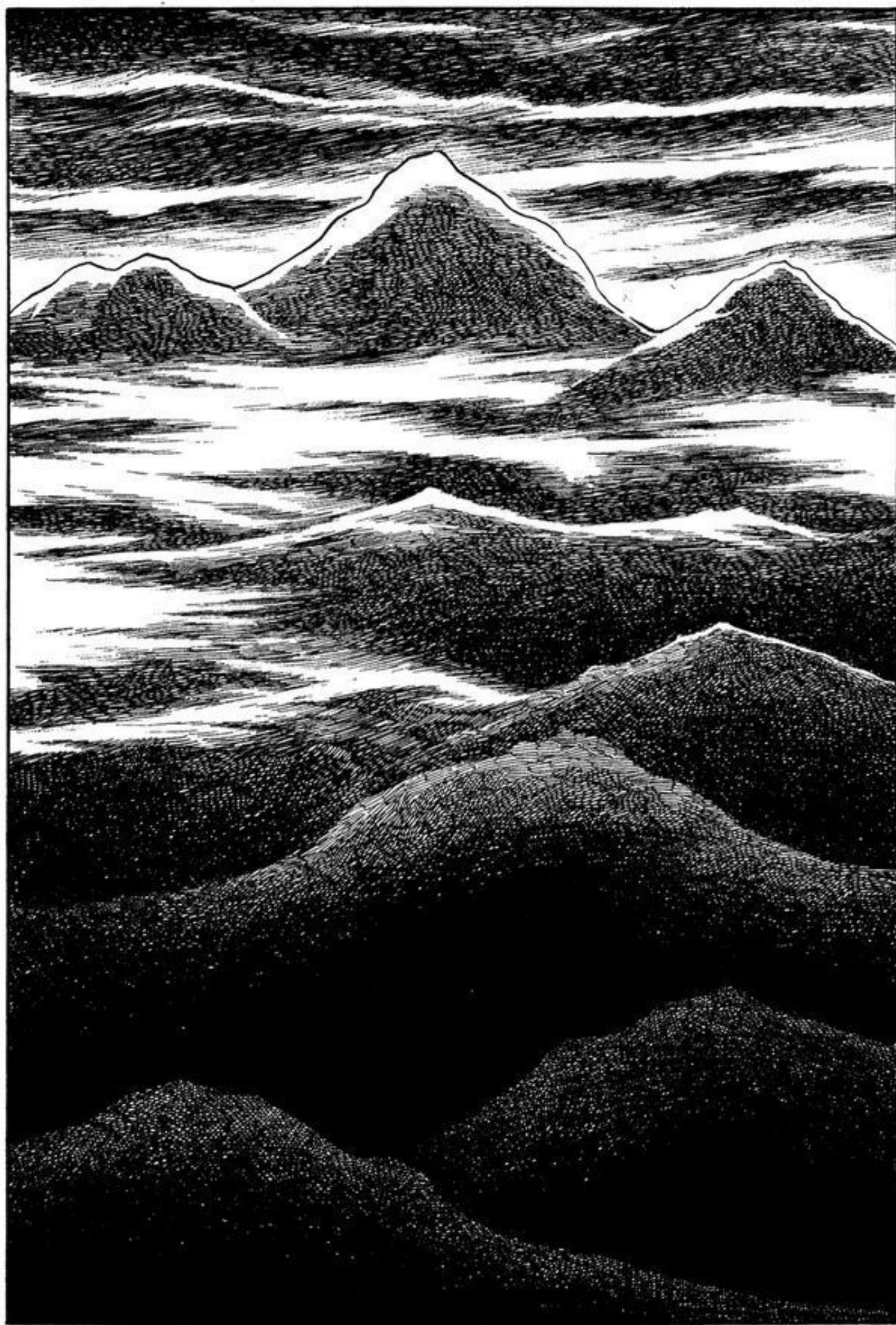




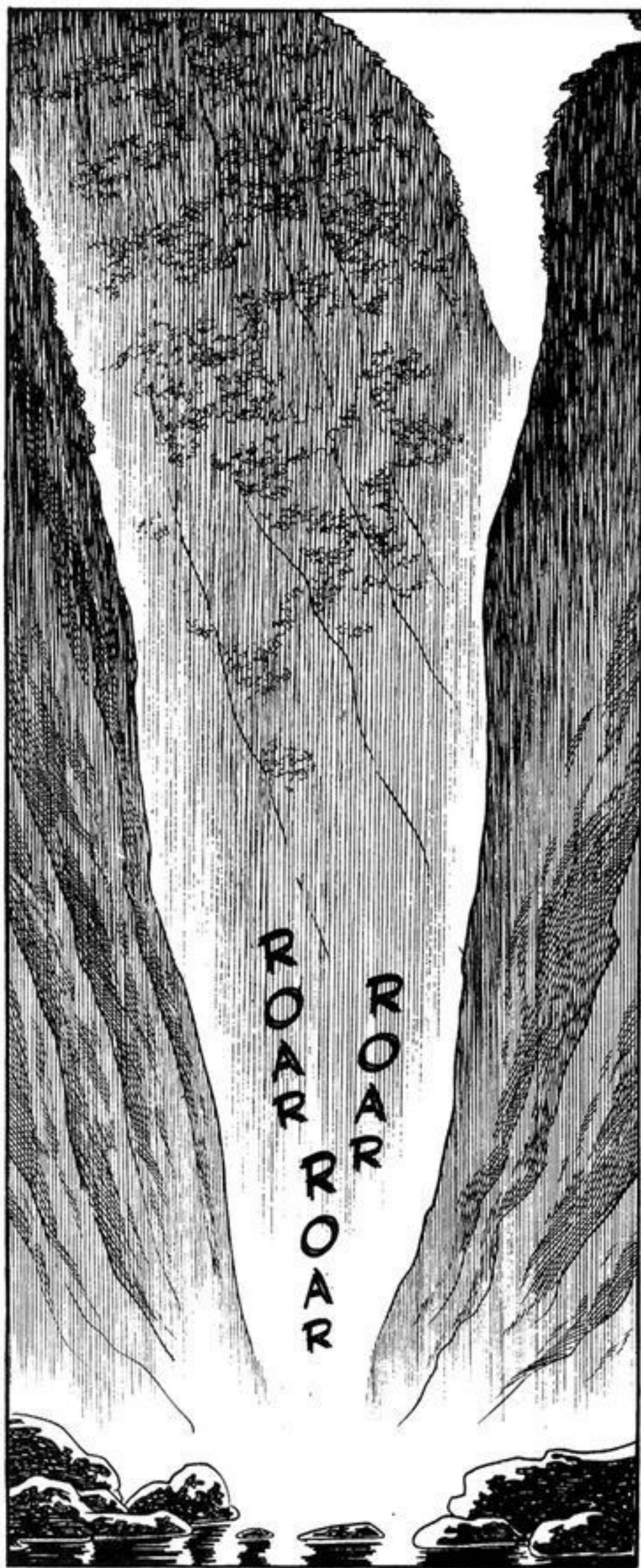








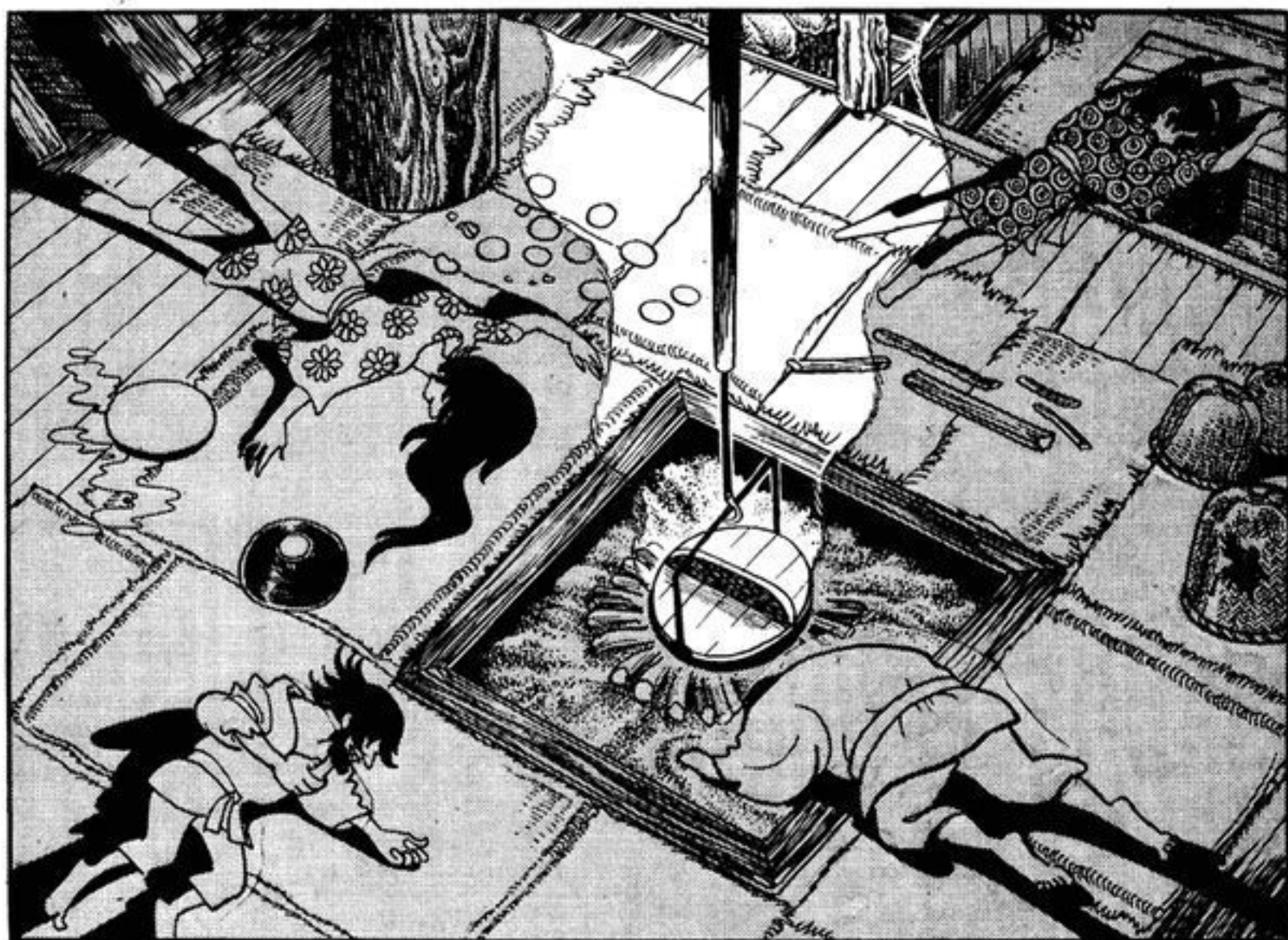








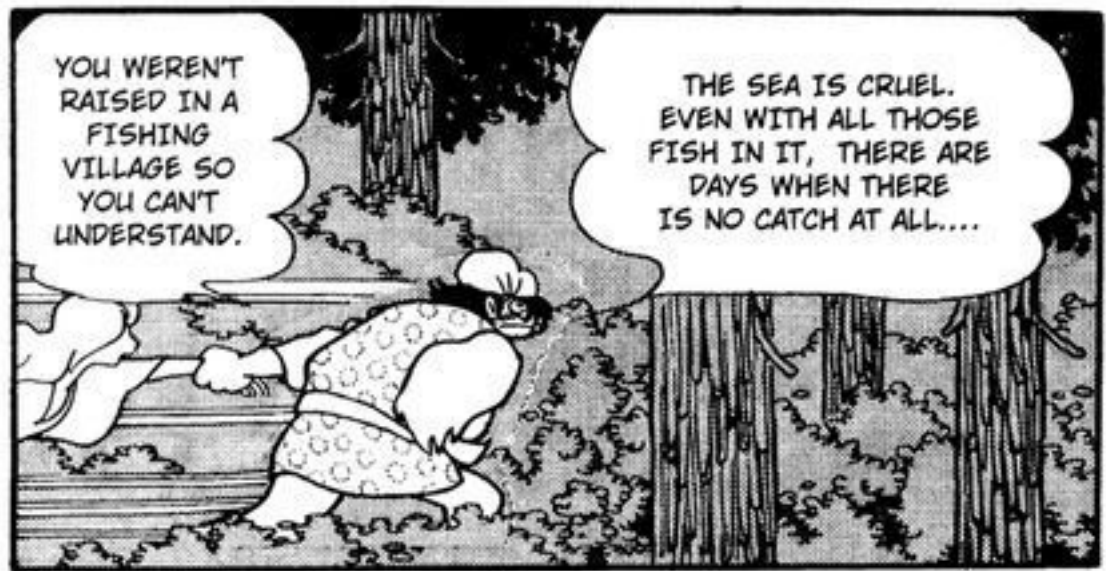
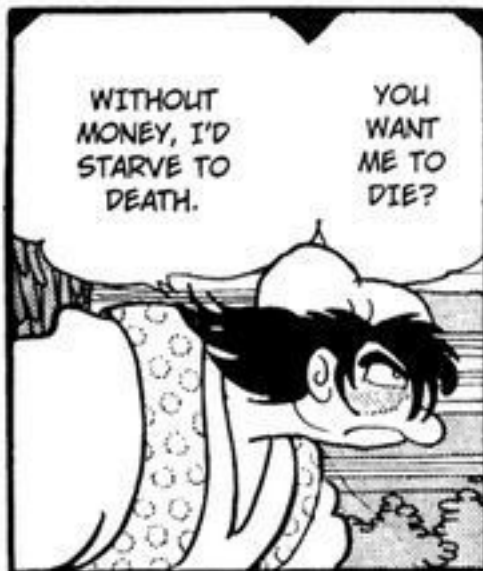




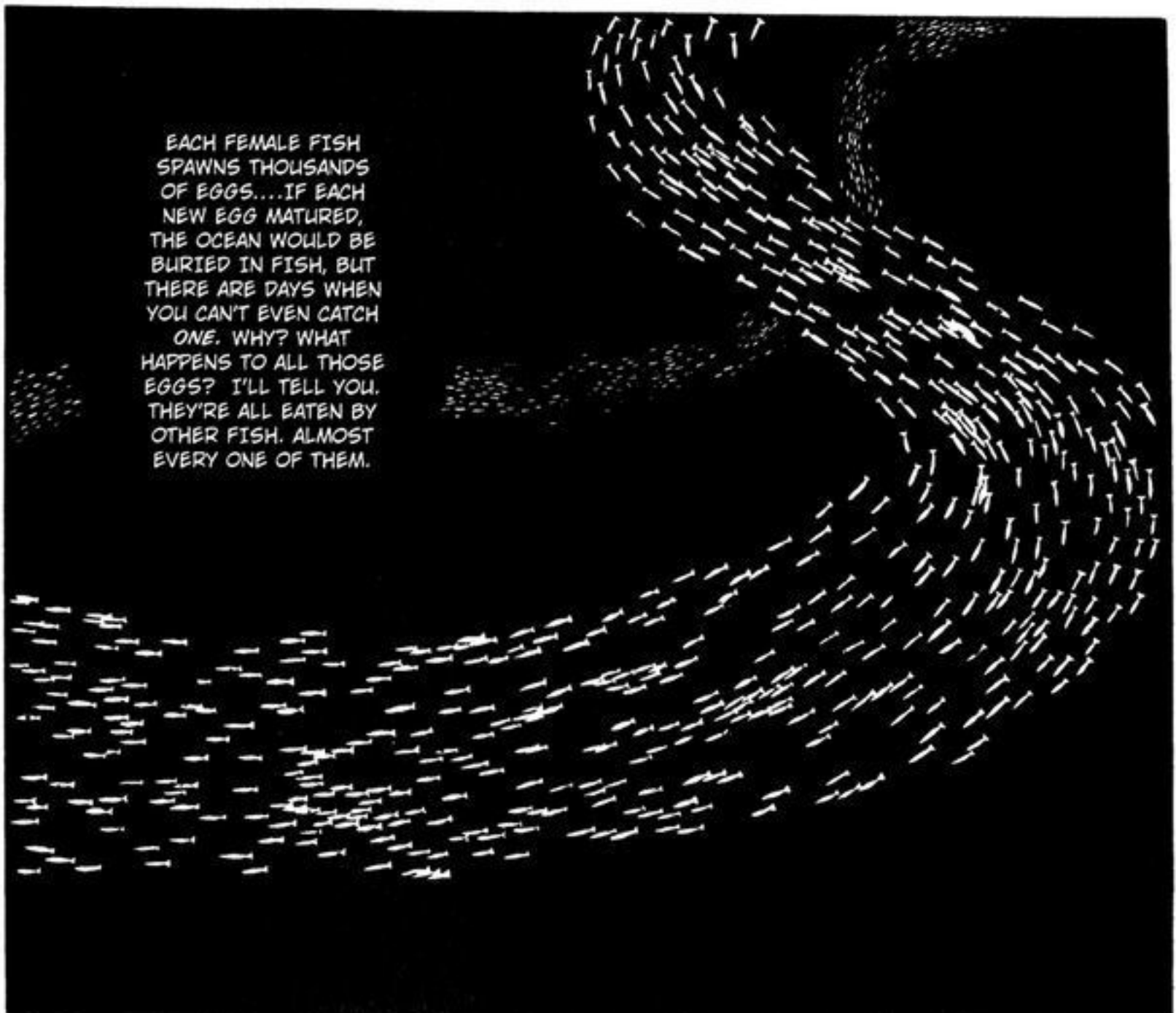
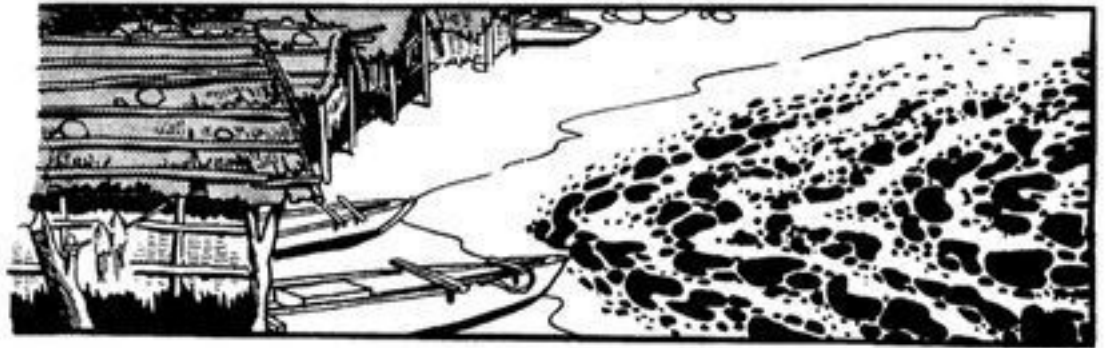






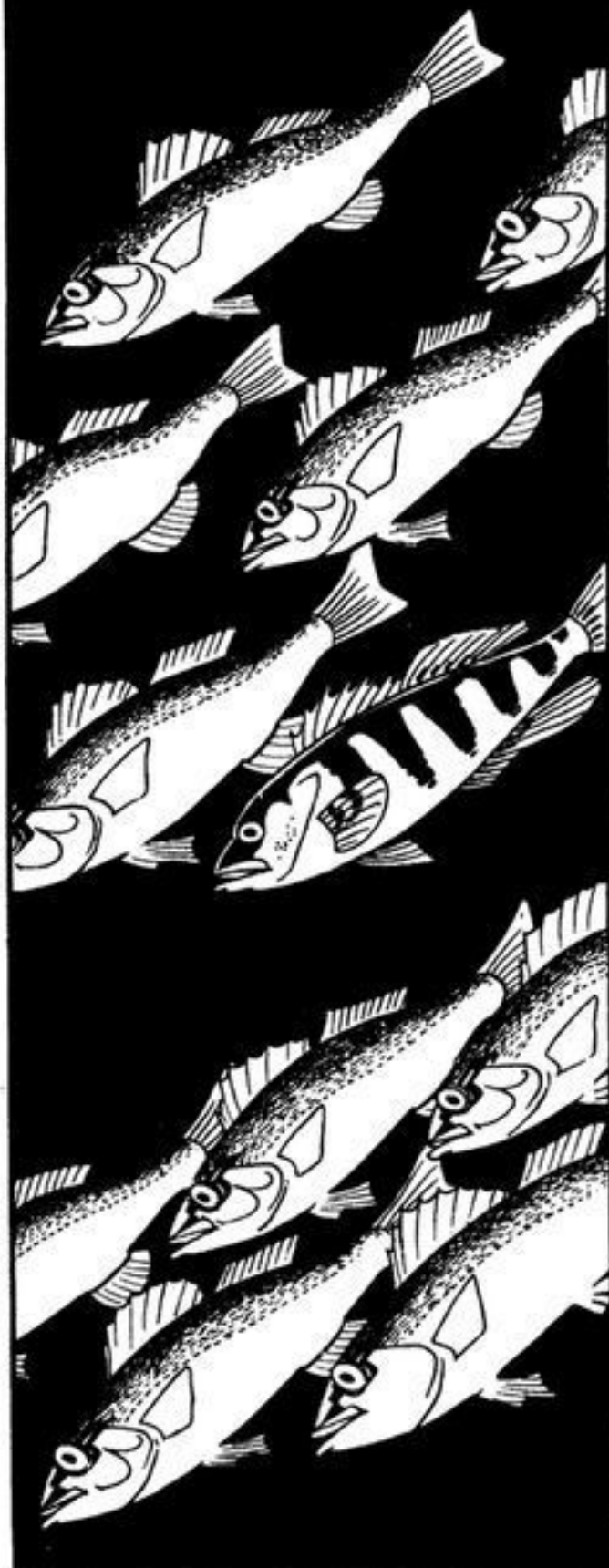


THAT'S WHEN THE FISHERMEN JUST SIT AND WAIT...THEY HOLD THEIR EMPTY BELLIES AND WAIT....AND HOPE THEY WON'T DIE.

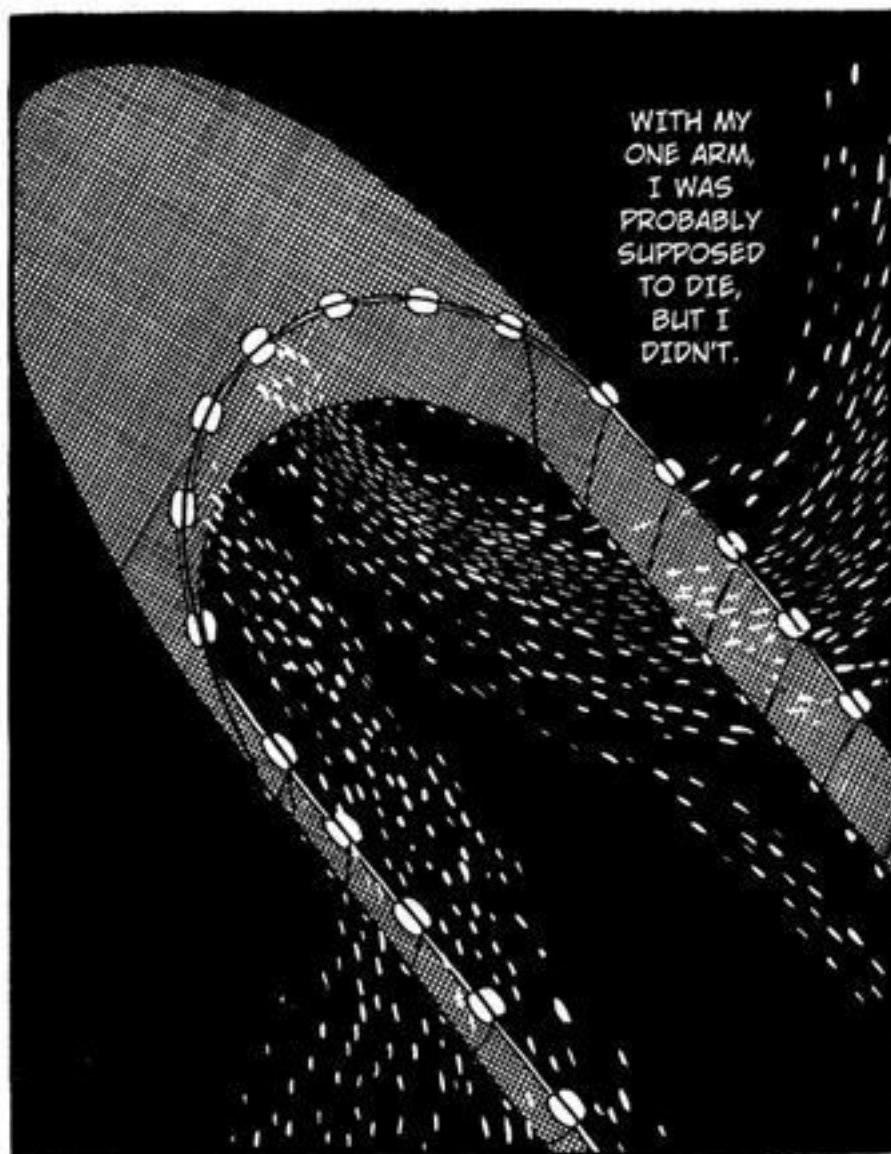




THOSE THAT DO  
SURVIVE ARE CAUGHT  
BY THE FISHERMAN  
AND EATEN, LEAVING  
ONLY A FEW. THAT'S  
LIFE. THE ONES LEFT  
ALIVE ARE THE WINNERS.  
PEOPLE DIE TO LET  
OTHERS LIVE. AND IF  
THEY DIDN'T THE WORLD  
WOULD BE OVERFLOWING  
WITH PEOPLE.



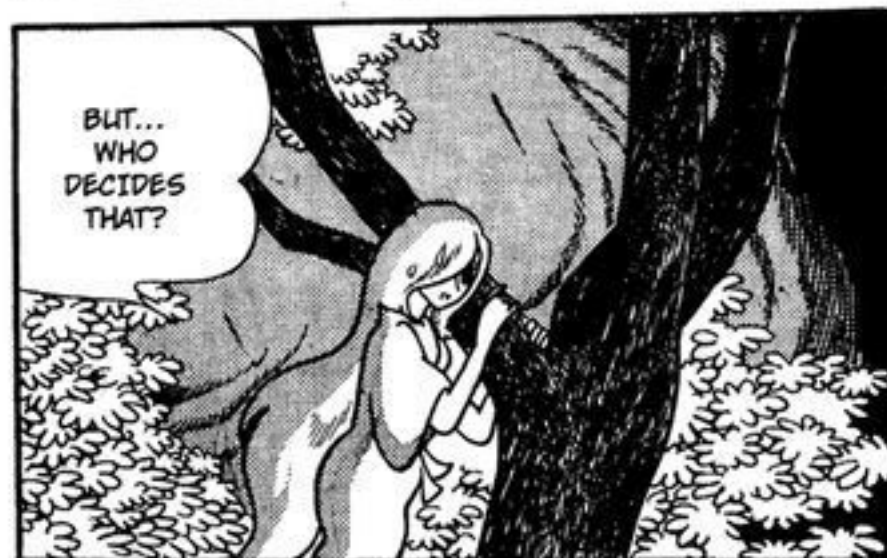
WITH MY  
ONE ARM,  
I WAS  
PROBABLY  
SUPPOSED  
TO DIE,  
BUT I  
DIDN'T.



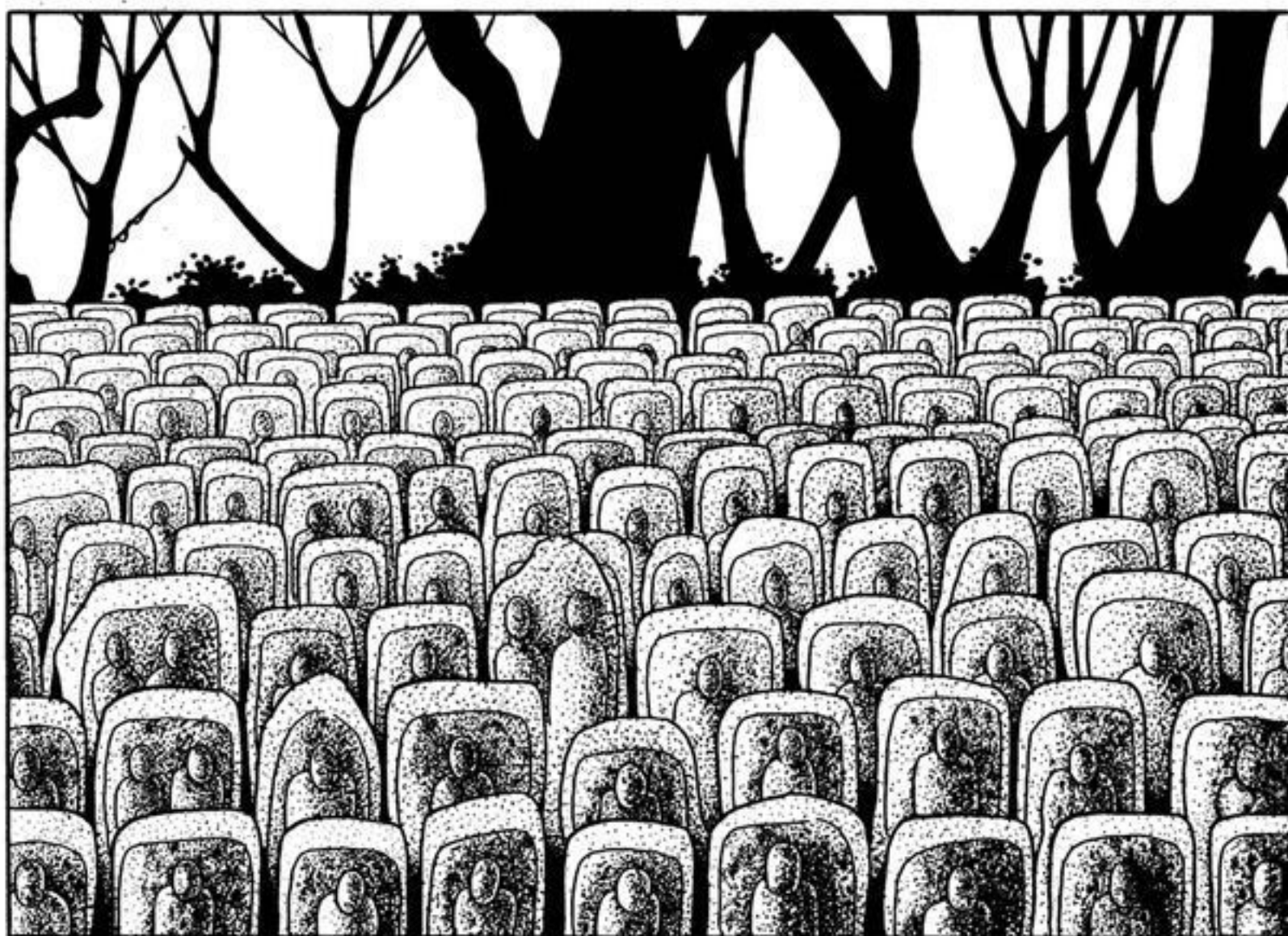
I HAVE  
A RIGHT  
TO LIVE.



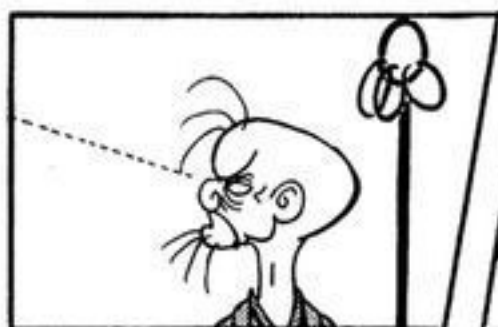
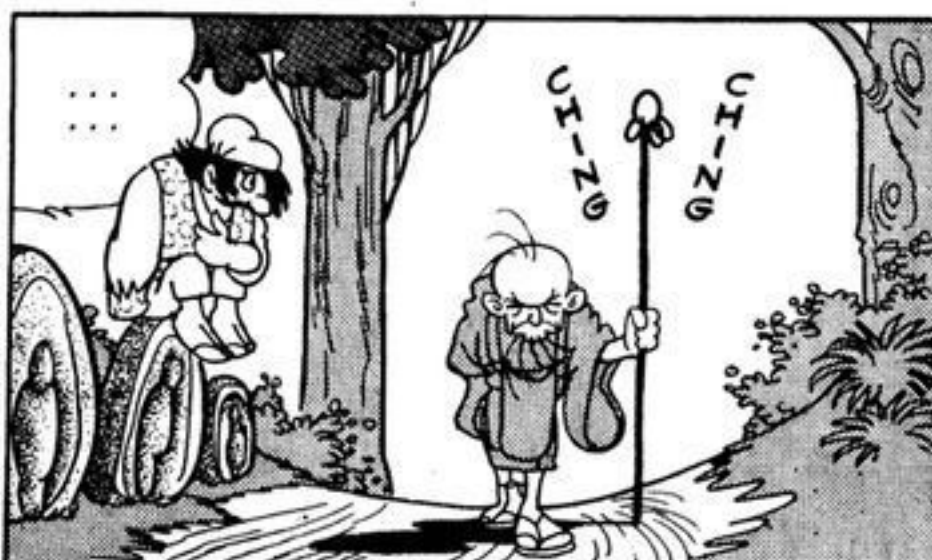
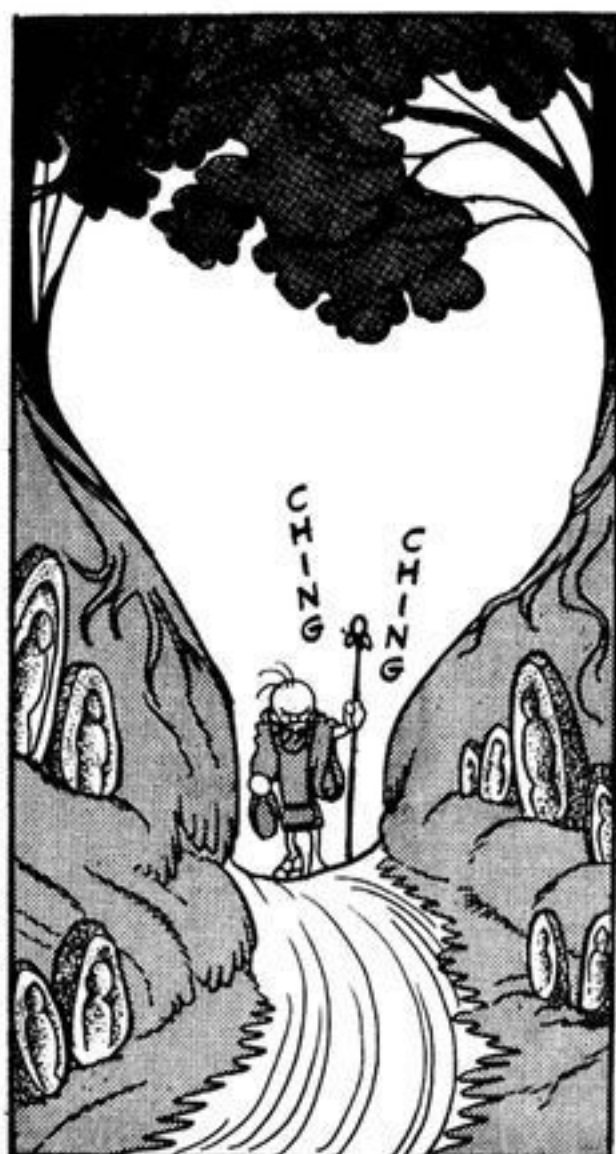
BUT...  
WHO  
DECIDES  
THAT?



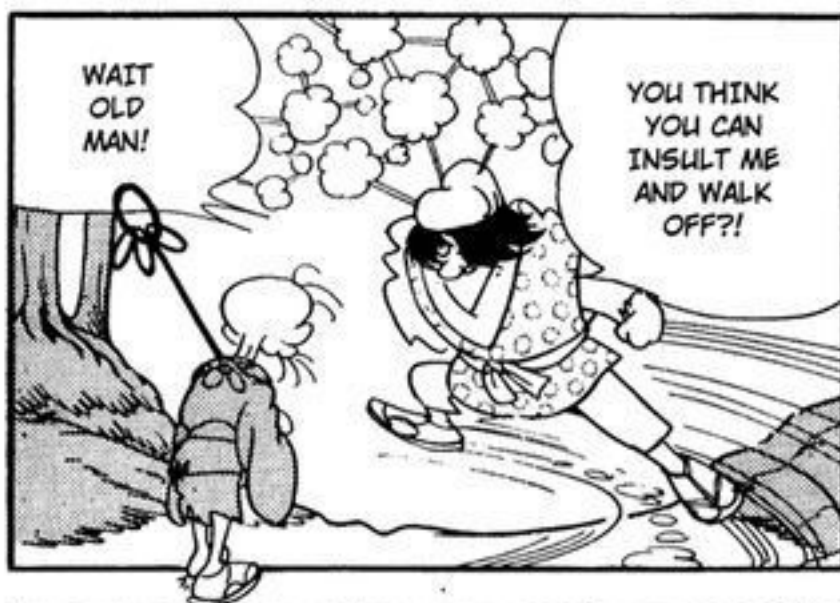




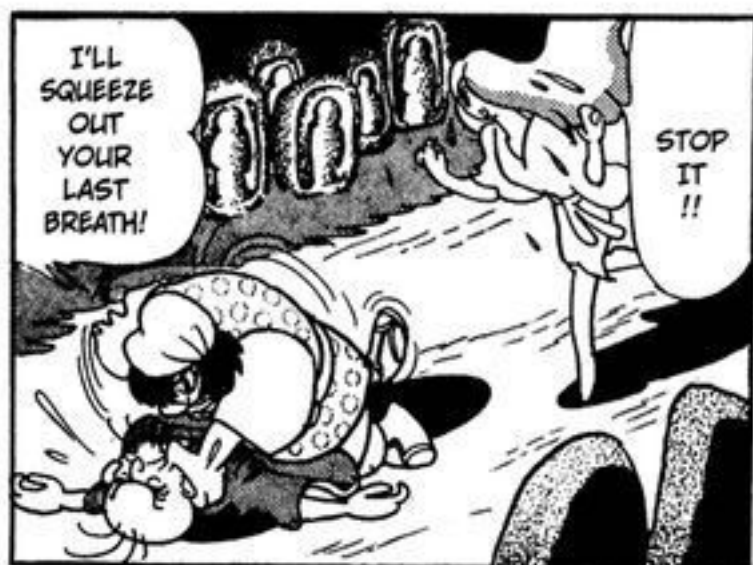




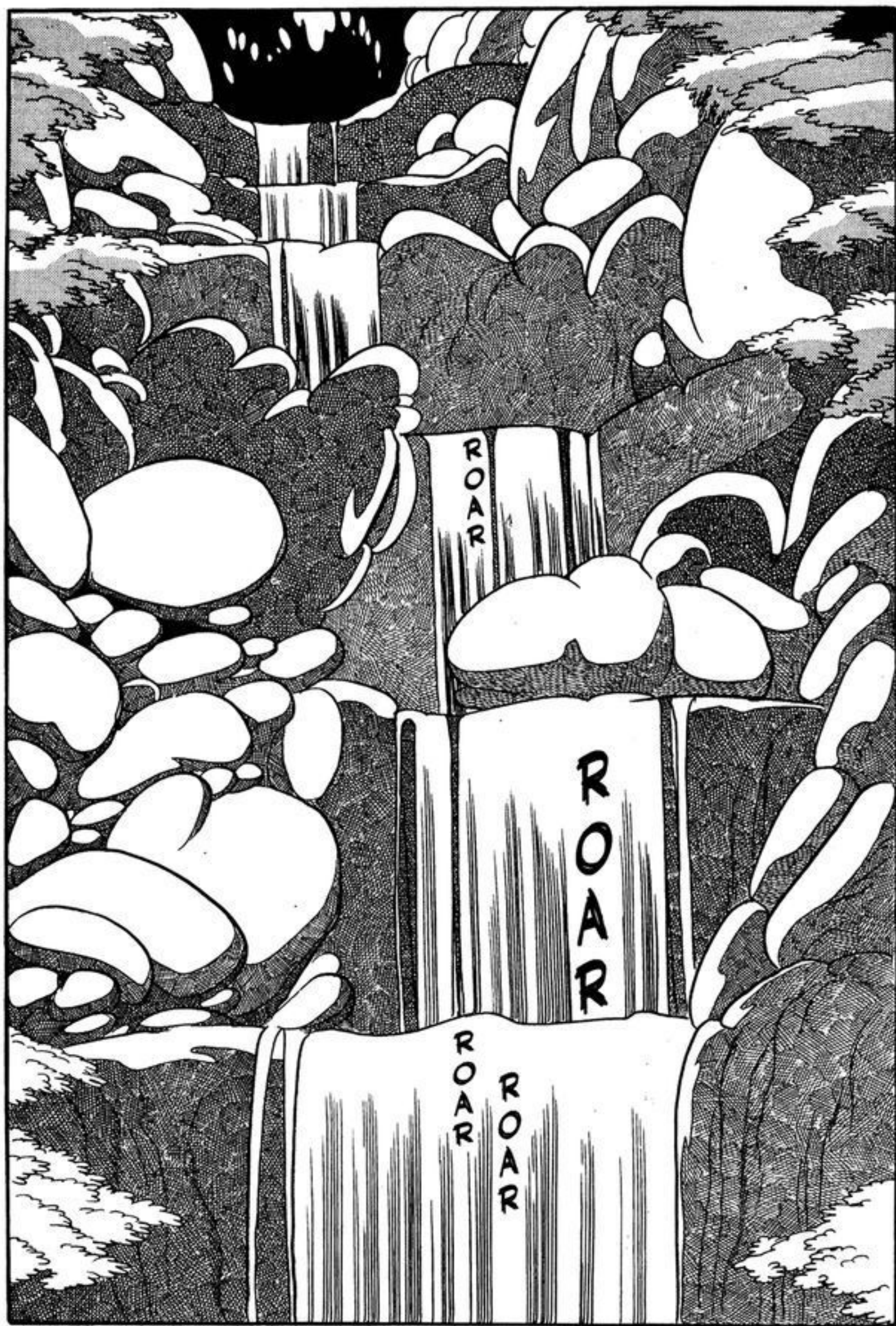




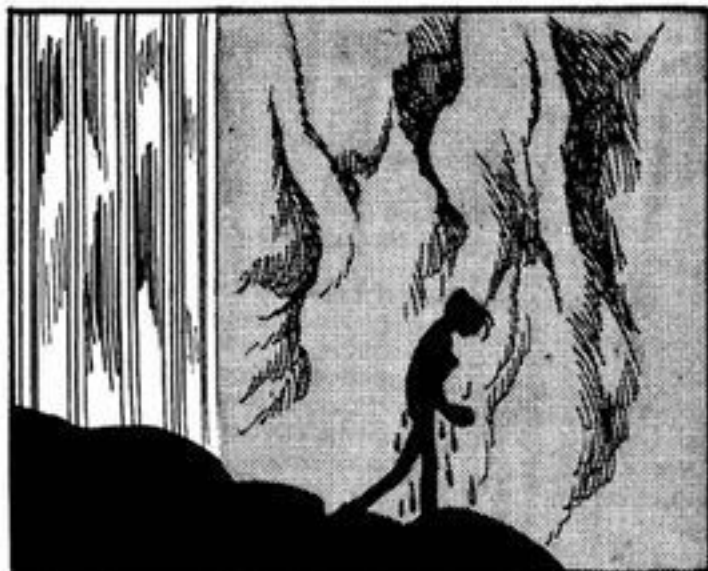




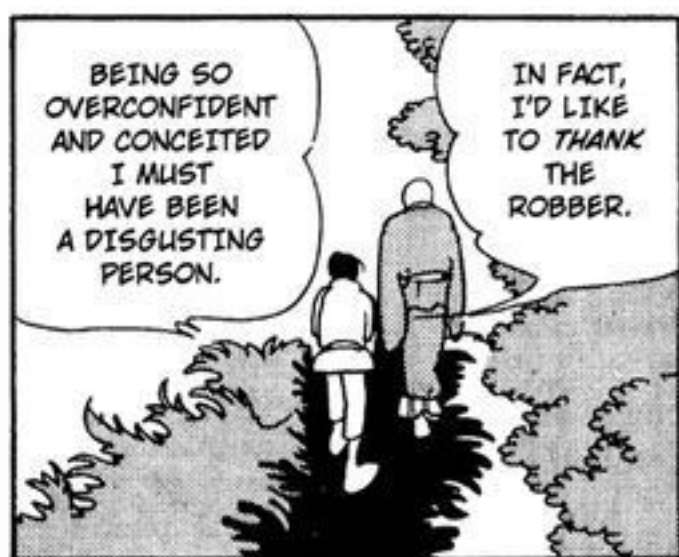








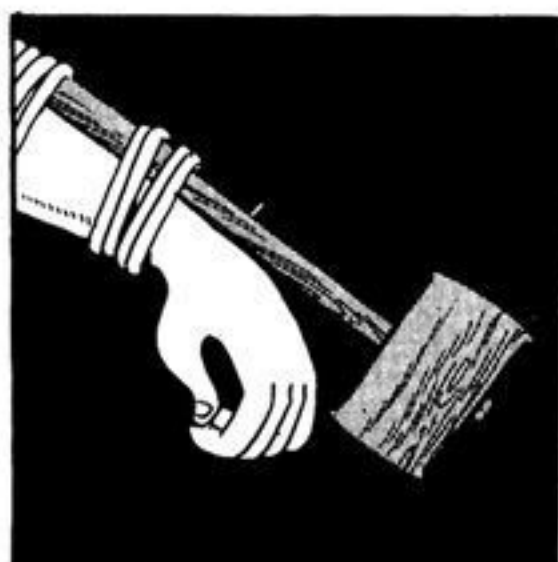
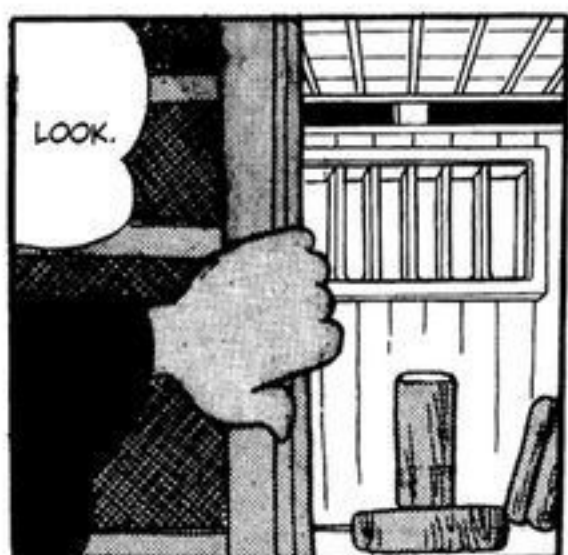
BUT THROUGH QUIET MEDITATION I'VE SEEN THE FOOLISHNESS AND PETTINESS OF MY WAYS....



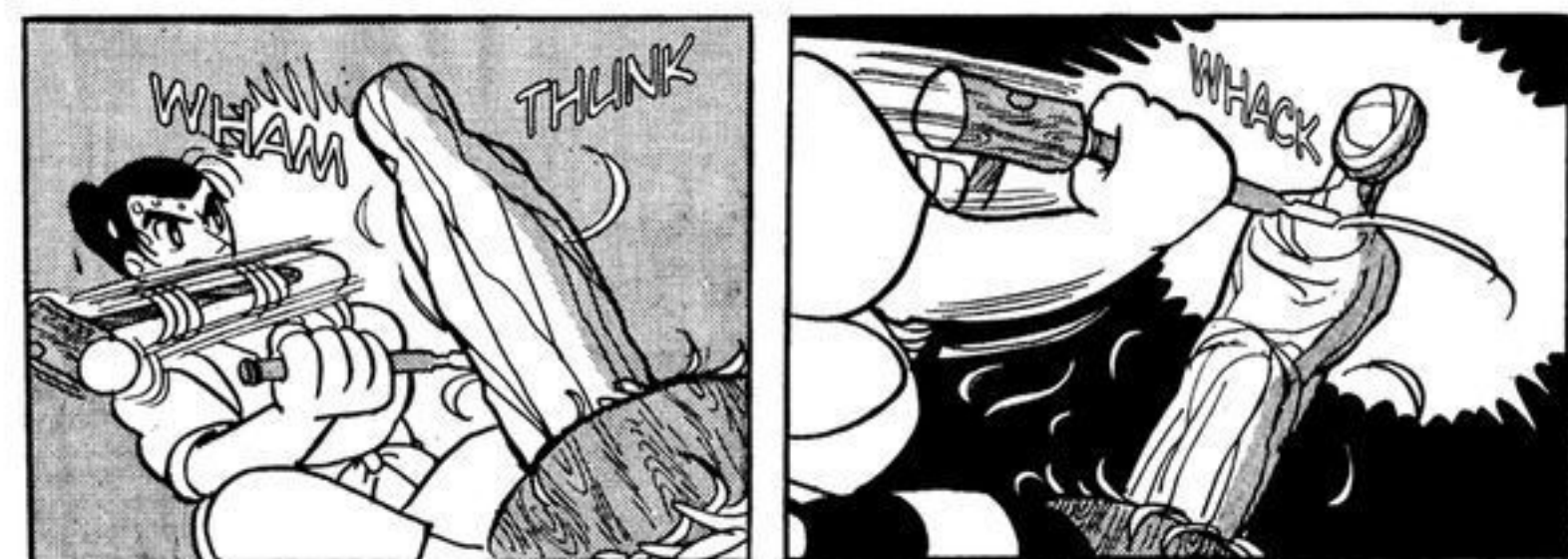
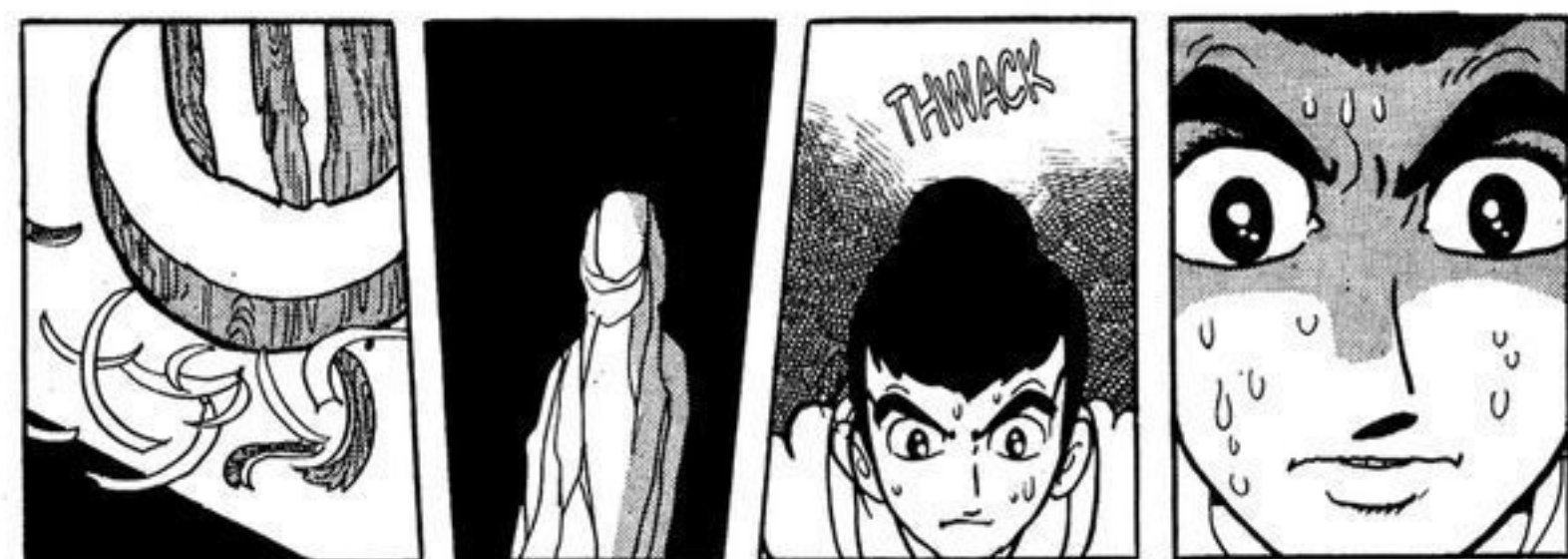
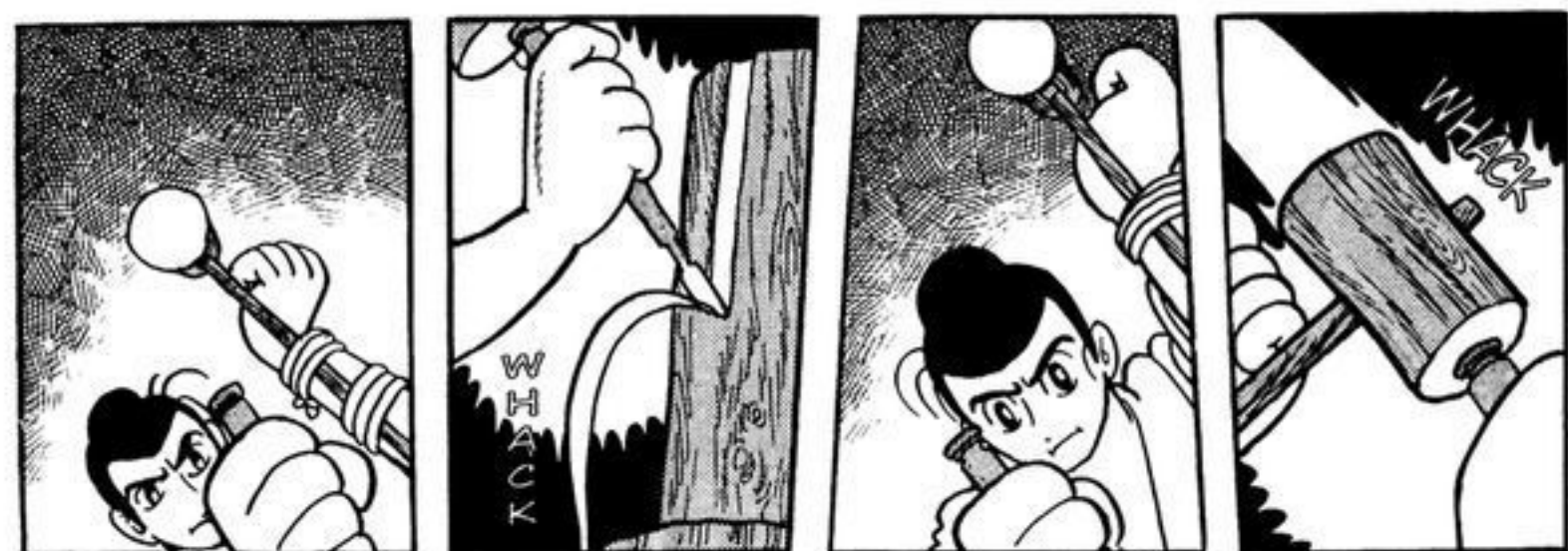
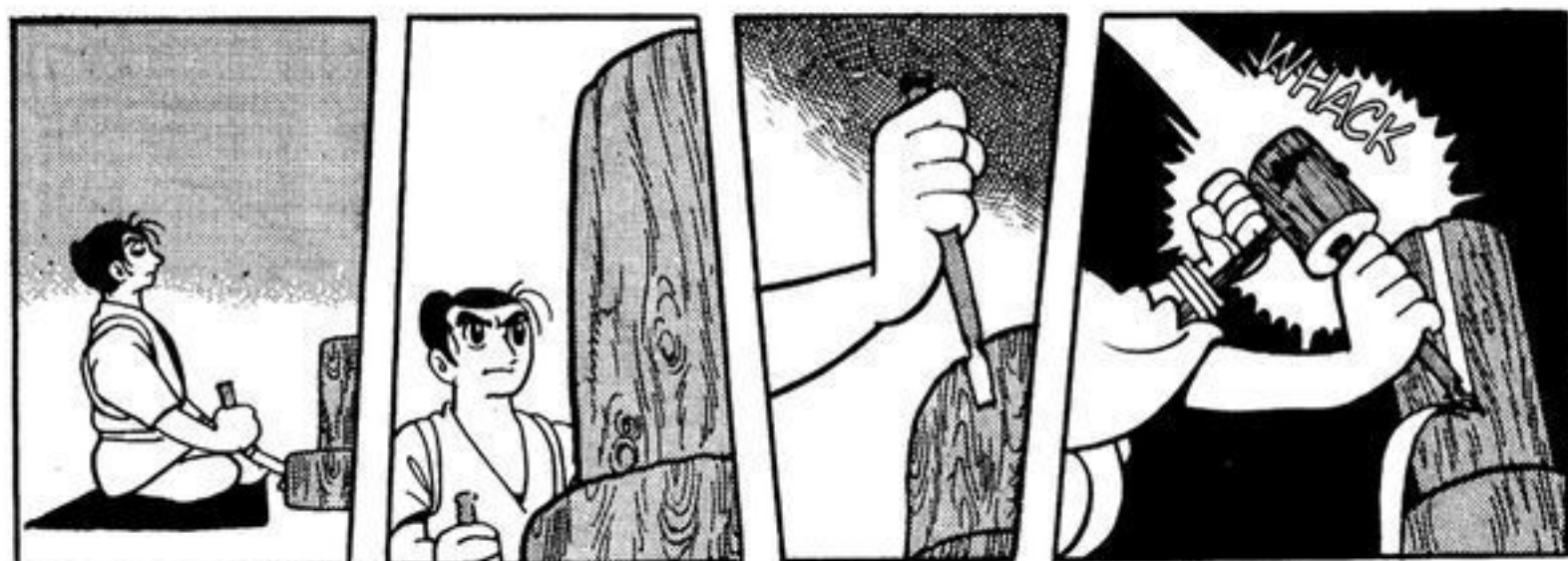
IN FACT, I'D LIKE TO THANK THE ROBBER.



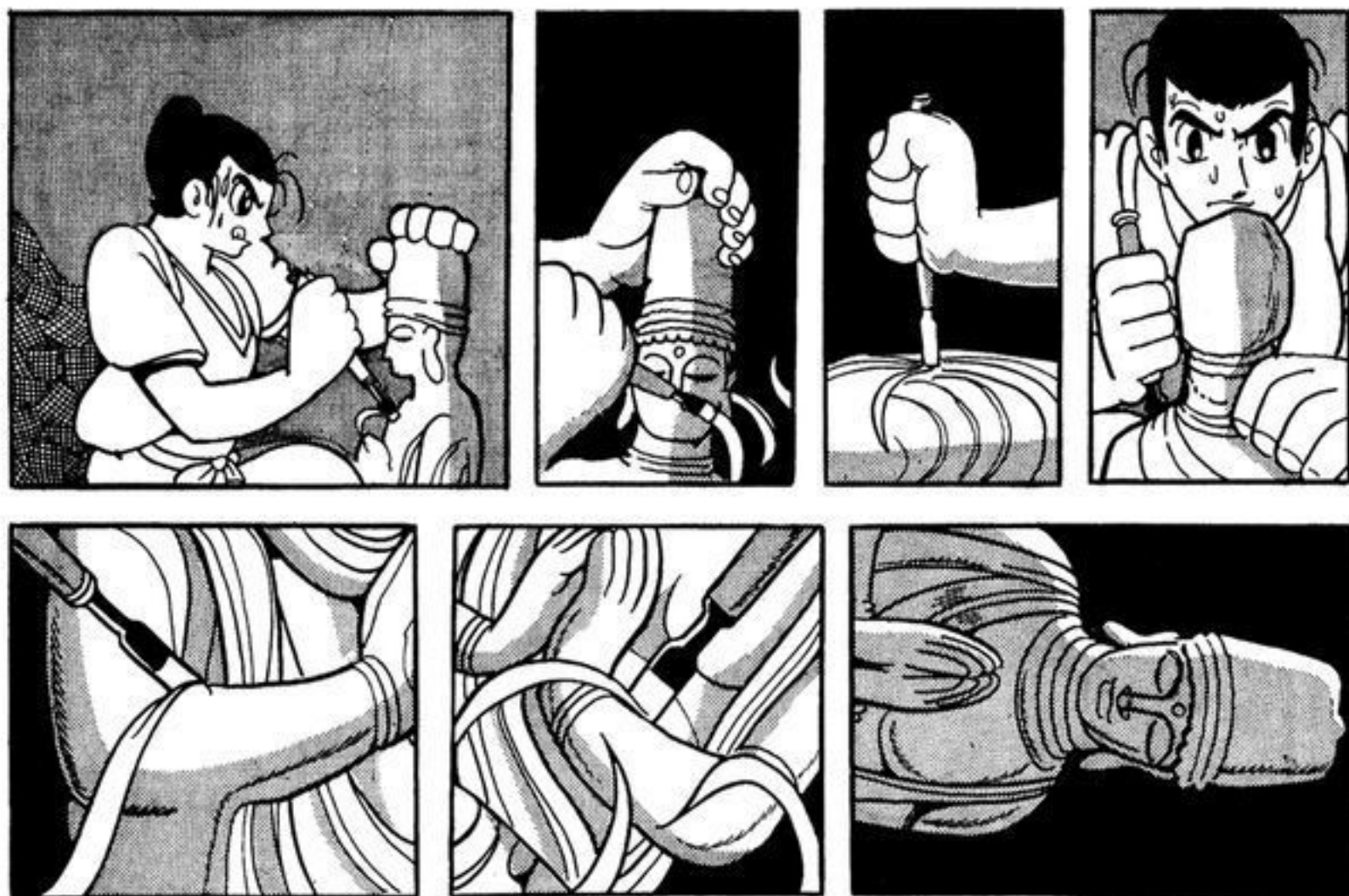




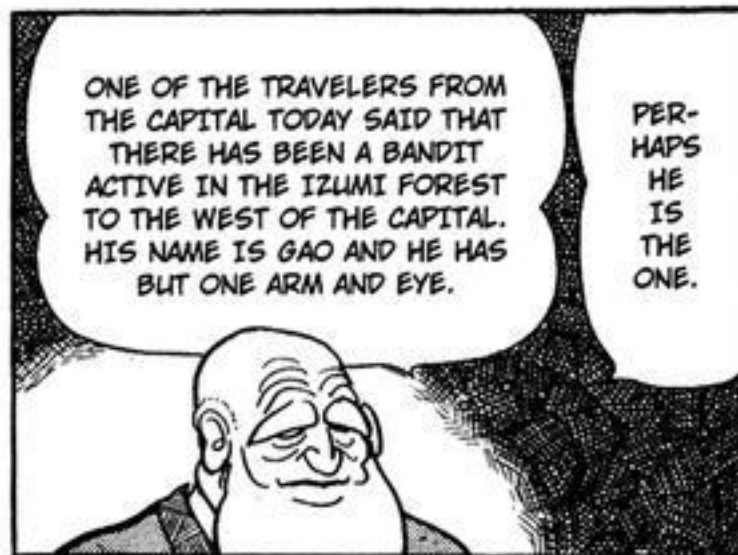




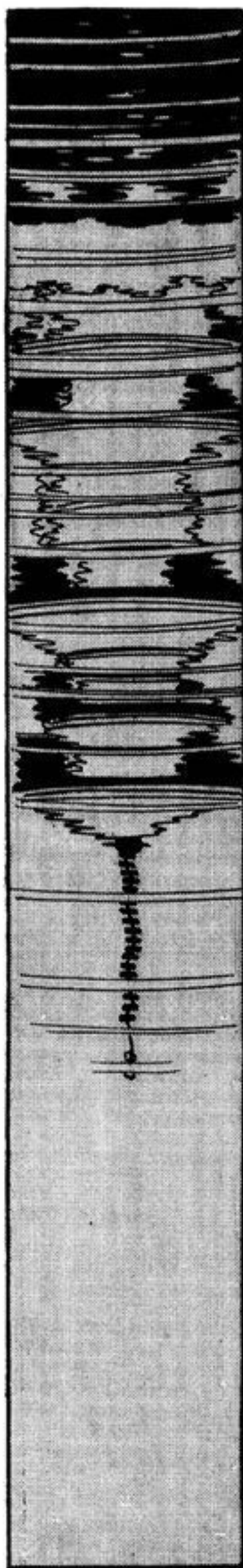
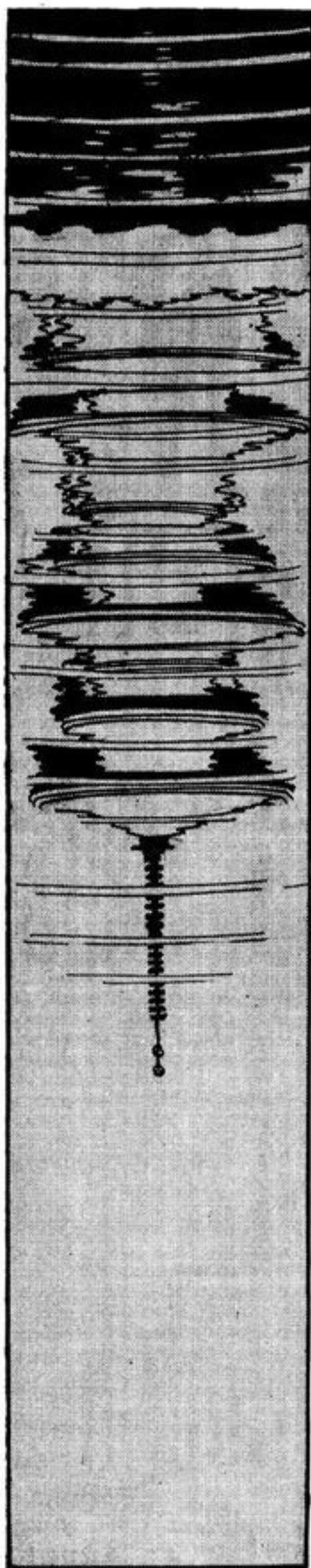














I GOT TWO  
BOLTS OF SILK  
AND SOME  
LACQUER COMBS  
AND MIRRORS  
BOSS!!

I MADE  
OFF WITH  
THREE GOLD  
PIECES!  
HEH!  
HEH!

ALL  
RIGHT!  
PUT THE  
PLUNDER  
INTO THE  
BOX!

BUT BOSS!!  
WHAT ABOUT  
**OUR SHARE**  
.....

SHARE?  
WHO SAID  
ANYTHING  
ABOUT  
SHARES?  
I PAY YOU  
REGULARLY.

HAH!  
DON'T JOKE  
WITH ME  
BOSS! I  
WANT MY  
SHARE OF  
THE LOOT!!

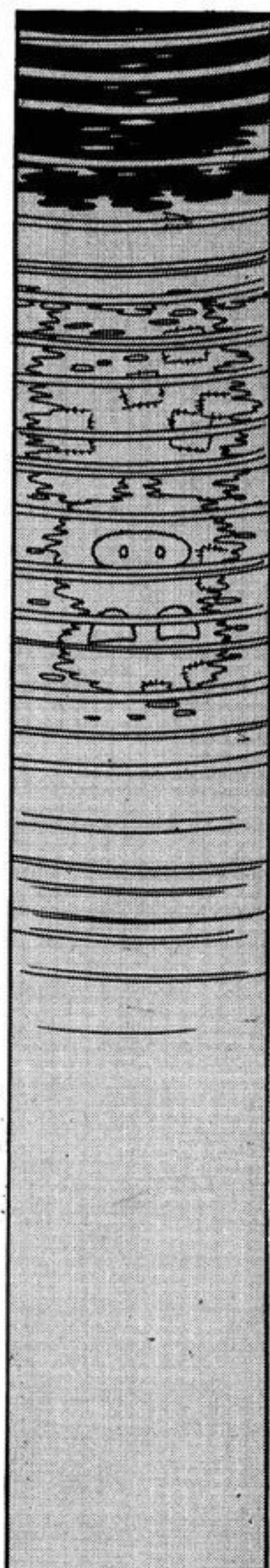
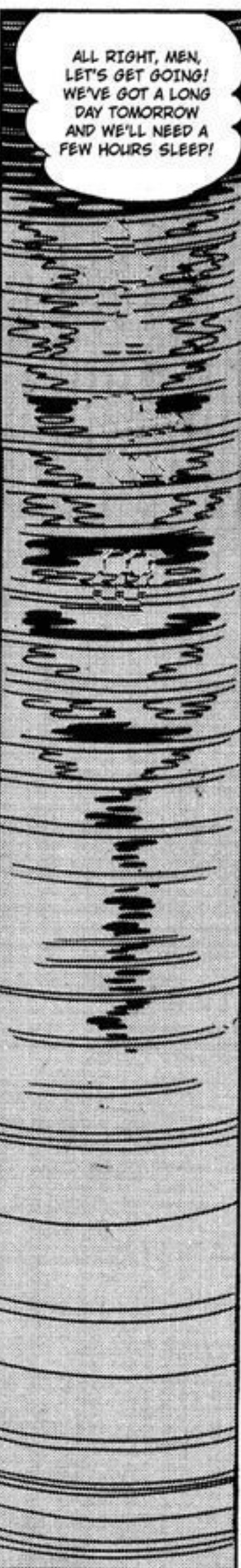
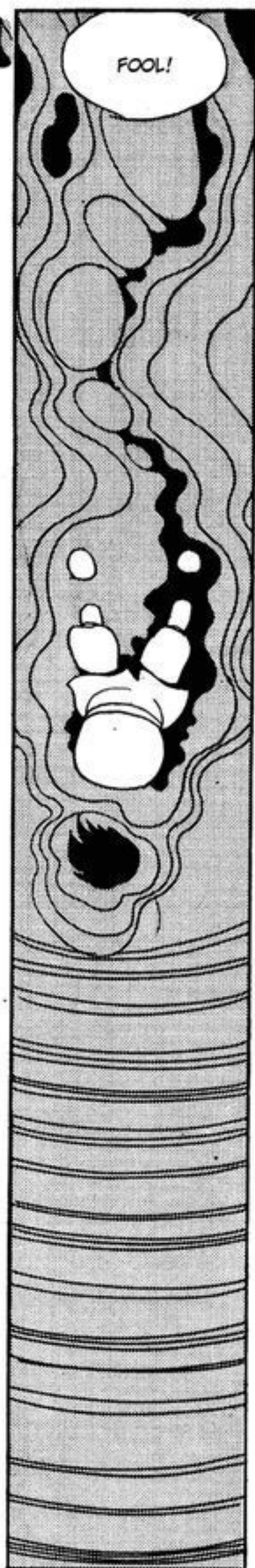
SHARE?

AND WHAT  
IF I SAY  
YOU DON'T  
GET ANY?

HEH, HEH....  
THEN I GUESS I'LL  
JUST HAVE TO TEAR  
OFF THAT ONE ARM  
OF YOURS. NO  
CRIPPLE'S GOING  
TO PUSH ME  
AROUND!!

YEAH?  
WELL IF  
THAT'S THE  
CASE.....

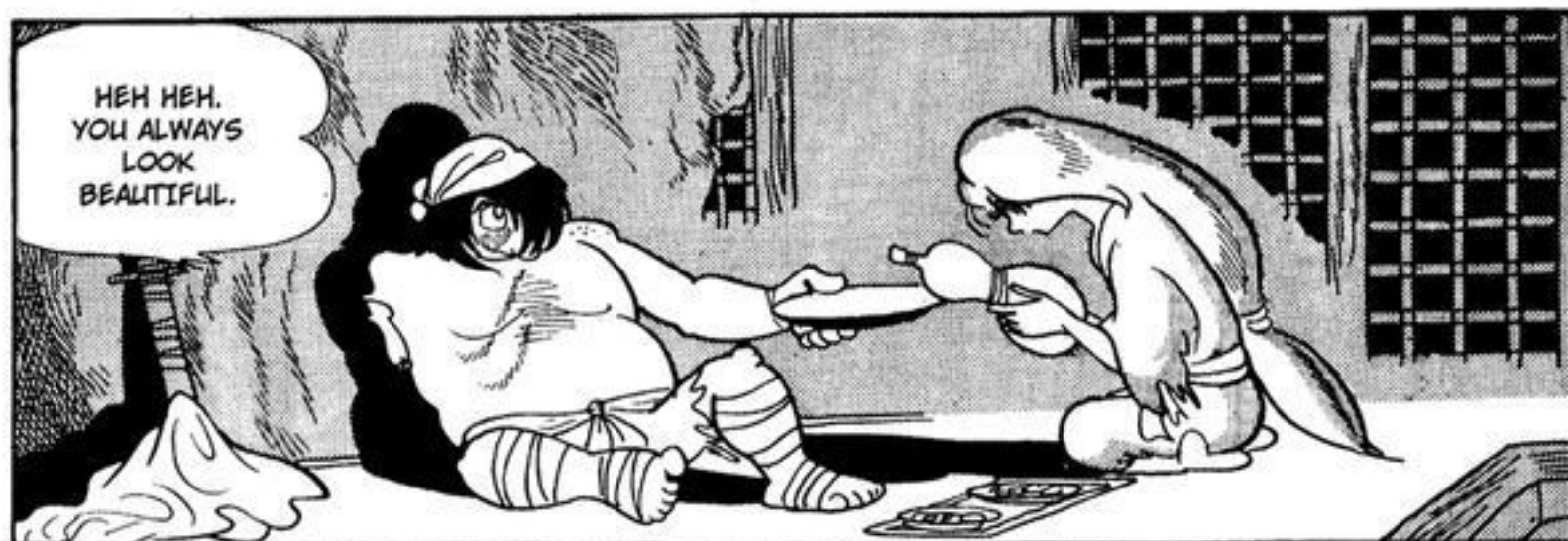




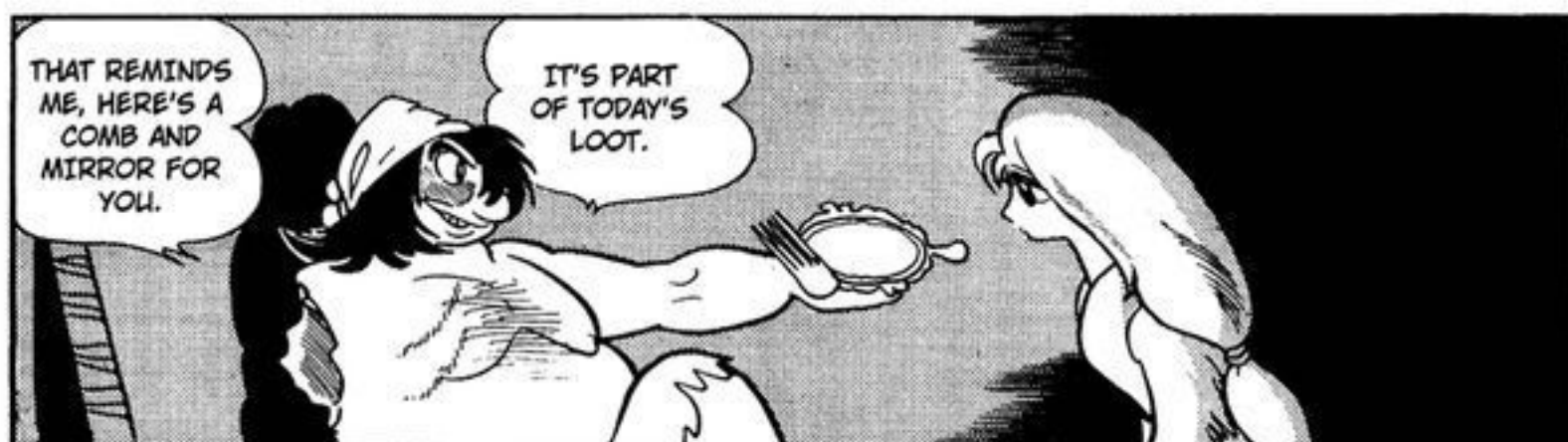




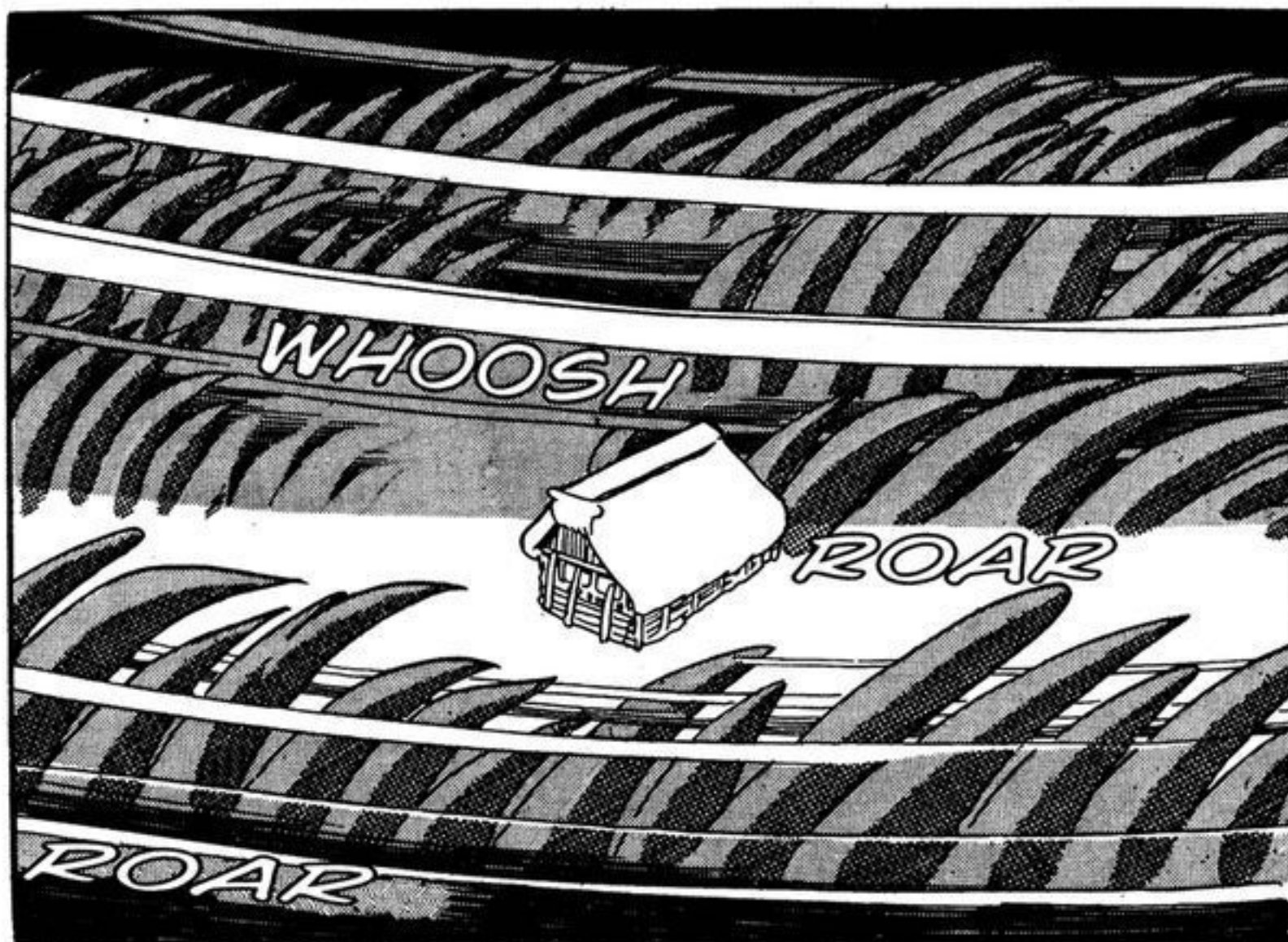
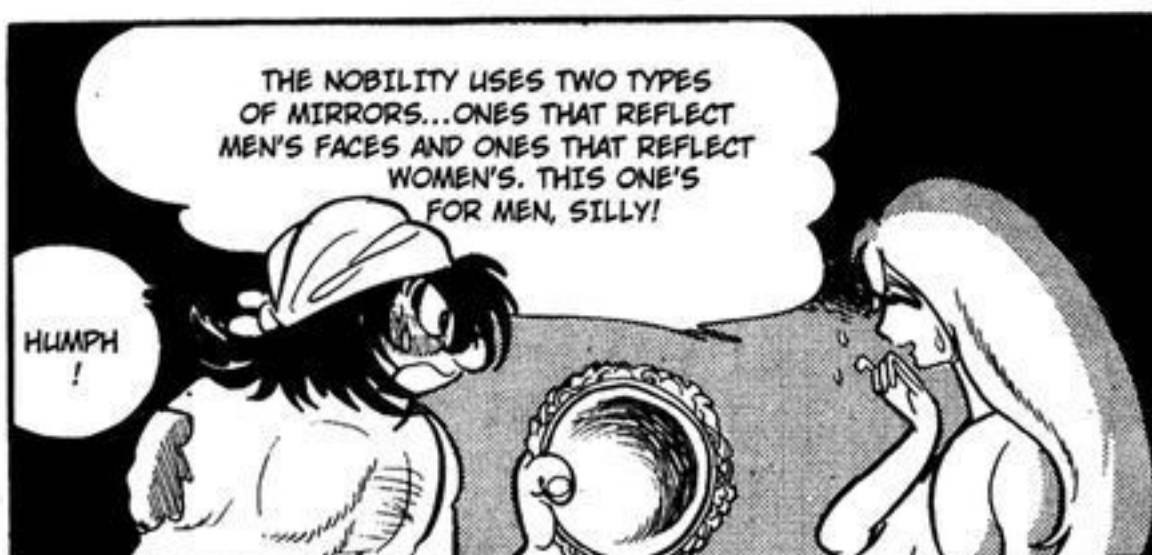
















AGGGH ...

AHARGH ...



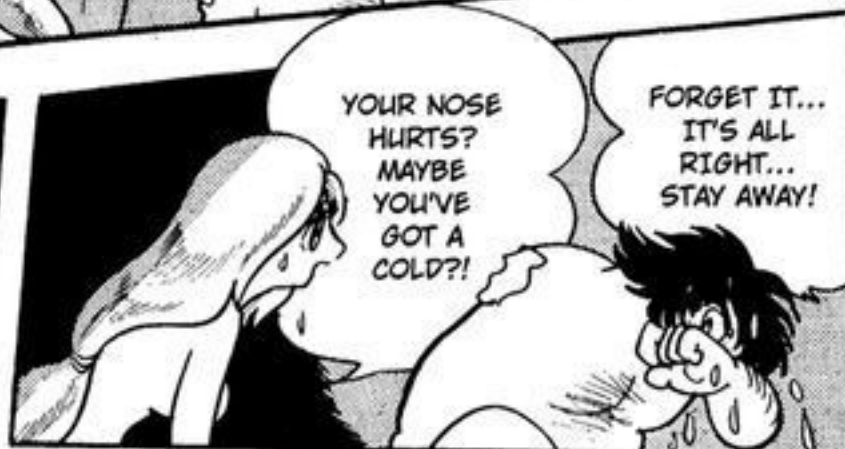
GAO! WHAT'S THE MATTER?



N... NOTHING ...



MY NOSE IS A LITTLE...



YOUR NOSE HURTS? MAYBE YOU'VE GOT A COLD?!

FORGET IT... IT'S ALL RIGHT... STAY AWAY!



THESE DAYS YOU DON'T SEEM TO SLEEP WELL...

YOU'RE ALWAYS SCRATCHING YOUR NOSE...

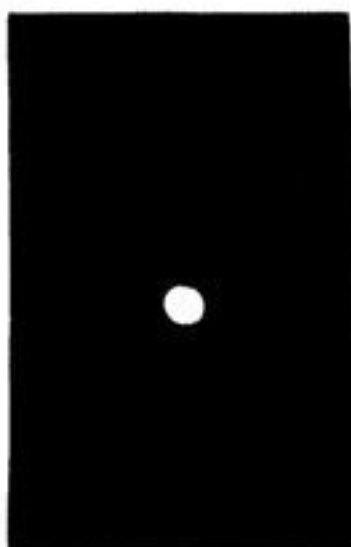
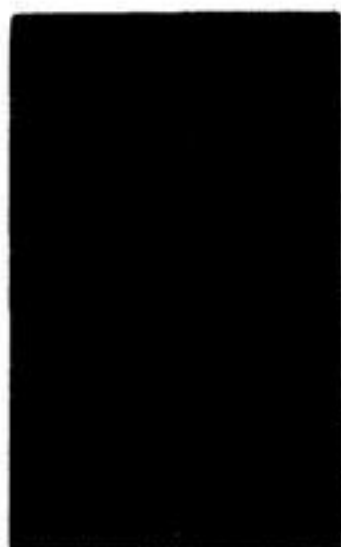
ME?



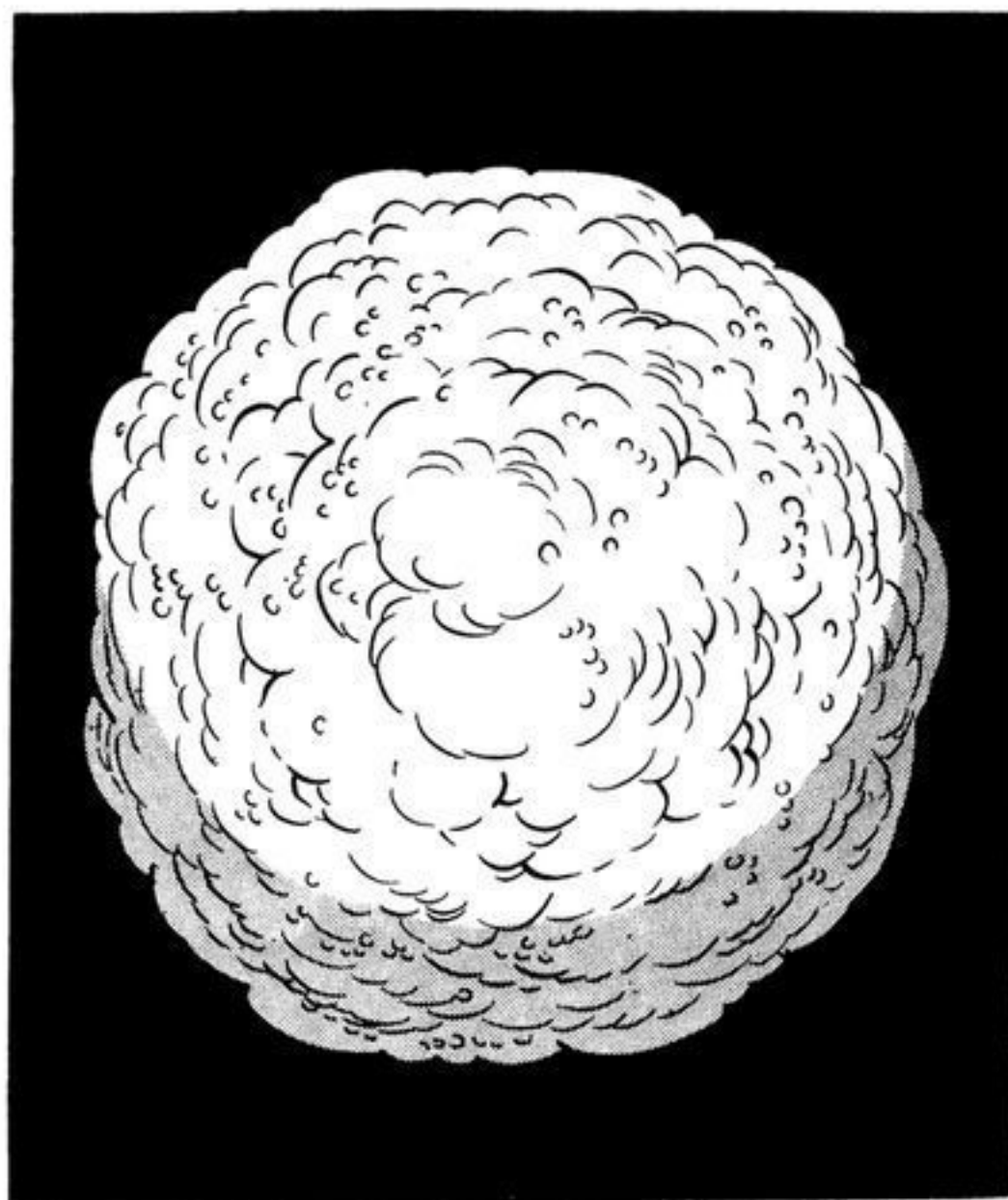
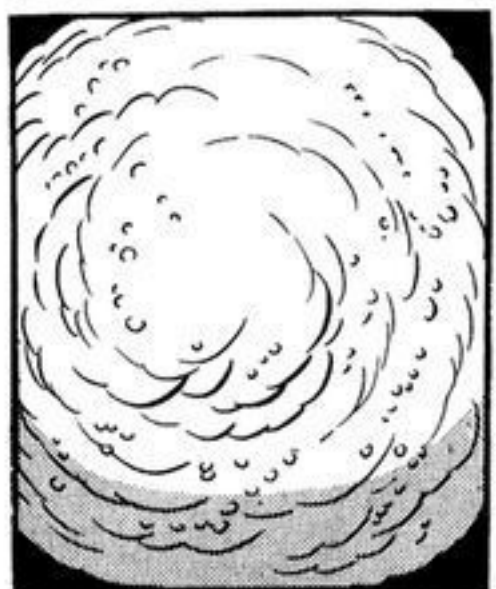
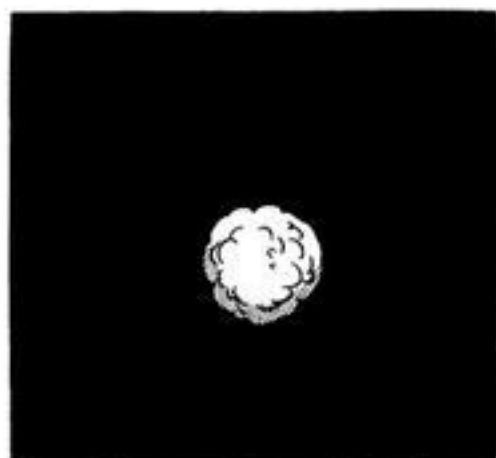
HEH... IT'S A LITTLE ITCHY. THE AIR IS BAD HERE. THERE MUST BE SOME POISONOUS PLANTS AROUND.



HUMPH.















OWW ...

IT HURTS!



I CAN'T STAND THE PAIN ANY LONGER.

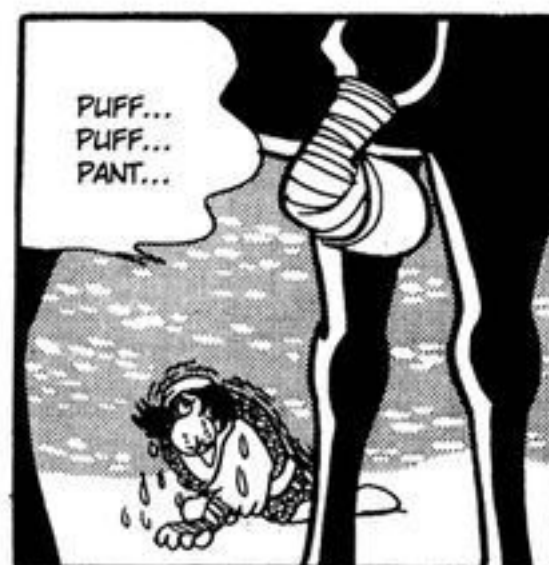


WHEW ...

AHH ....



I'D LIKE TO CUT THIS THING OFF...



PUFF... PUFF... PANT...



WOULD SOMEBODY PUT THIS MEDICINE ON FOR ME?

IT'S THE STUFF BAYA ALWAYS BUYS FOR ME AND PUTS ON MY NOSE ...



WHAT?! THIS ISN'T MEDICINE!



BOSS! MAYBE IT'S POISONOUS!



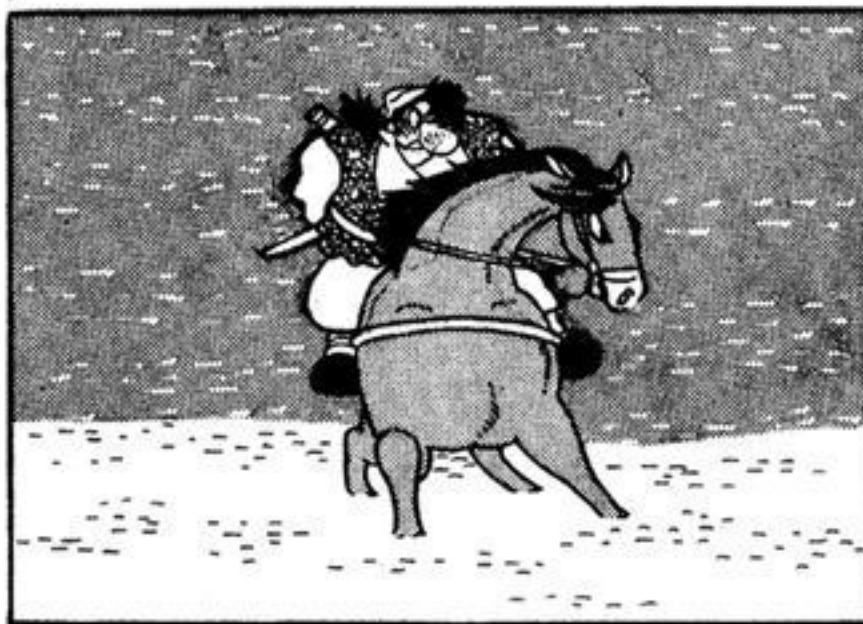
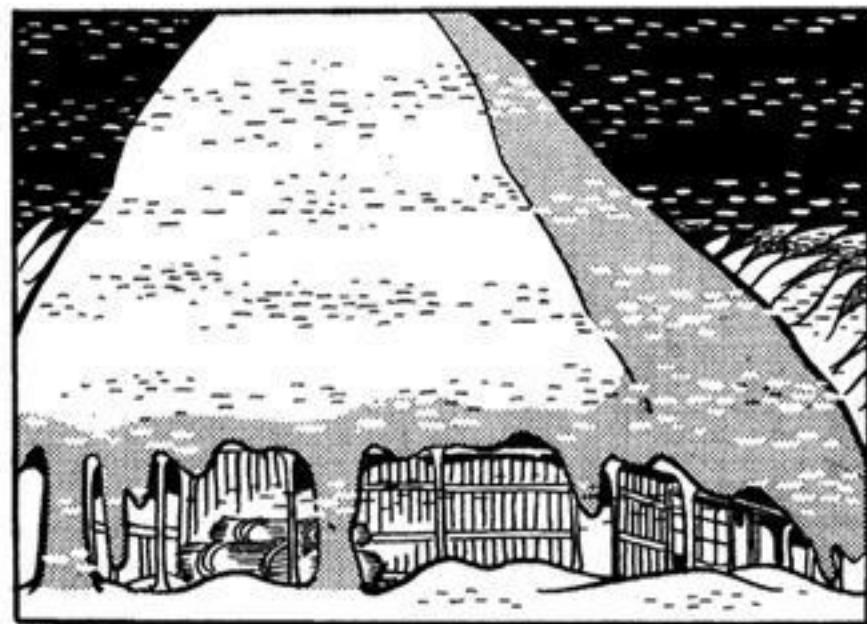
HAS BAYA BEEN PUTTING THIS ON YOUR NOSE THE WHOLE TIME?!

IT CAN'T CURE YOU! IT WILL JUST MAKE IT WORSE!

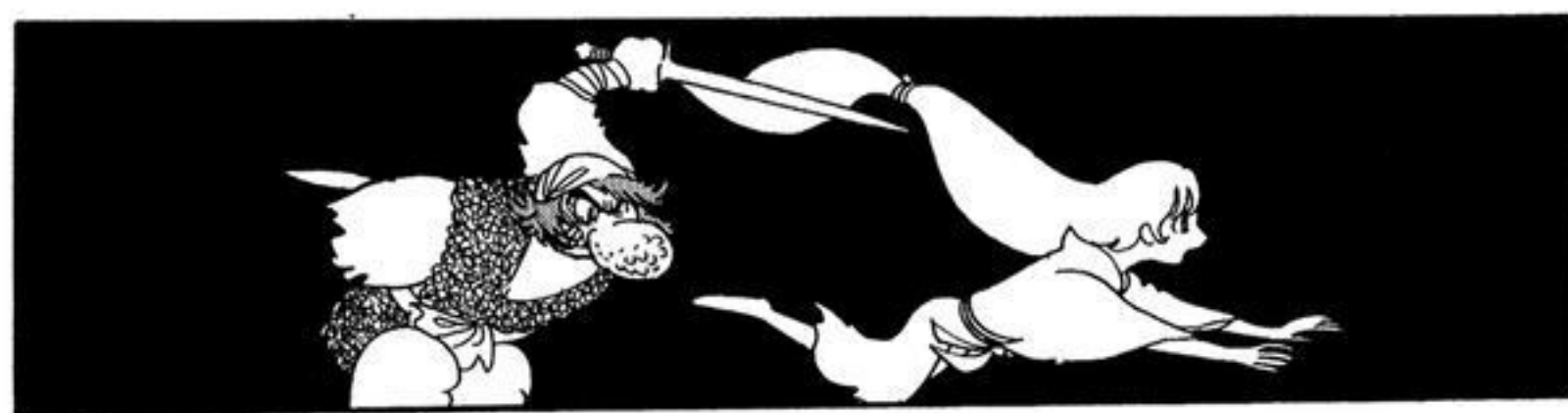




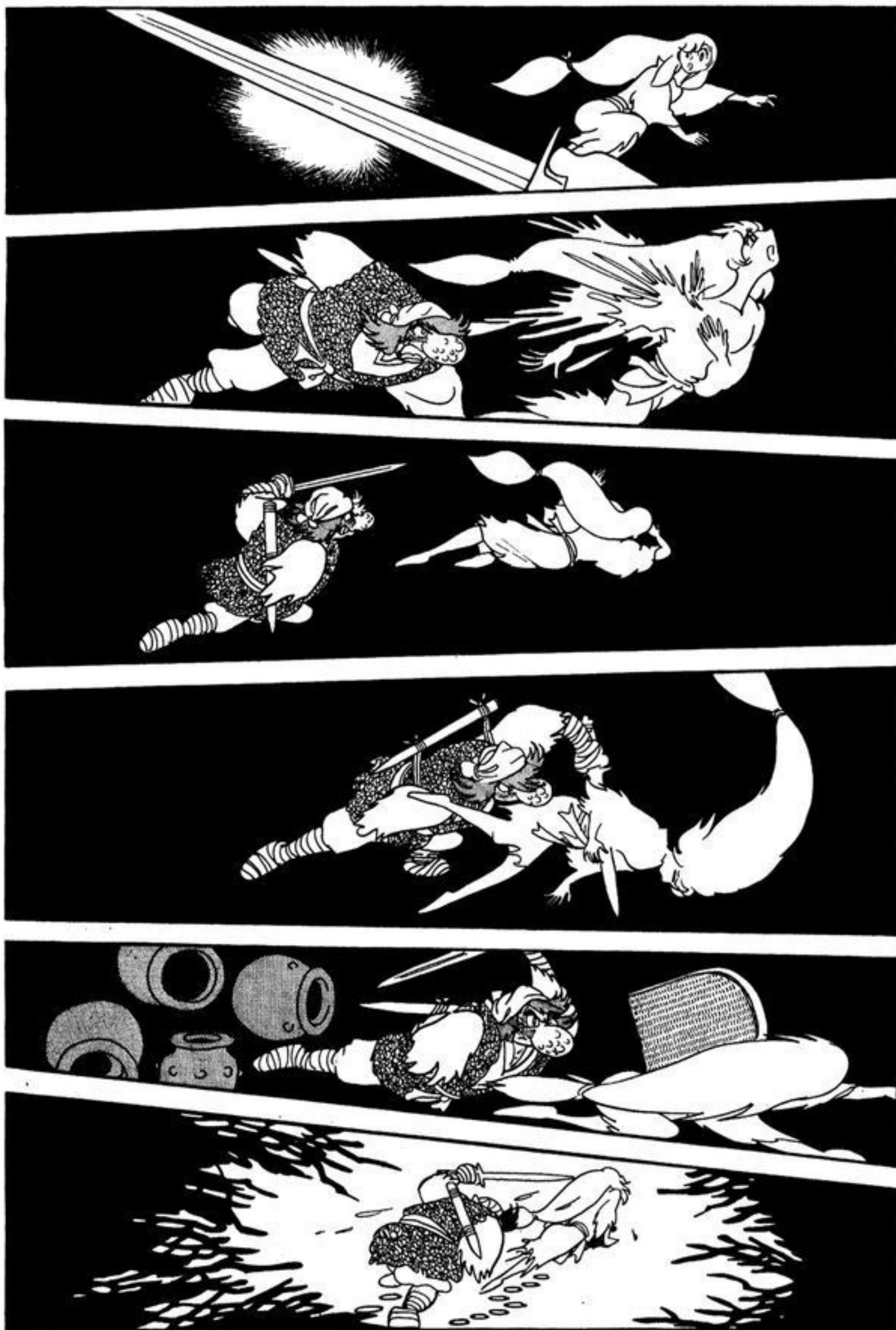




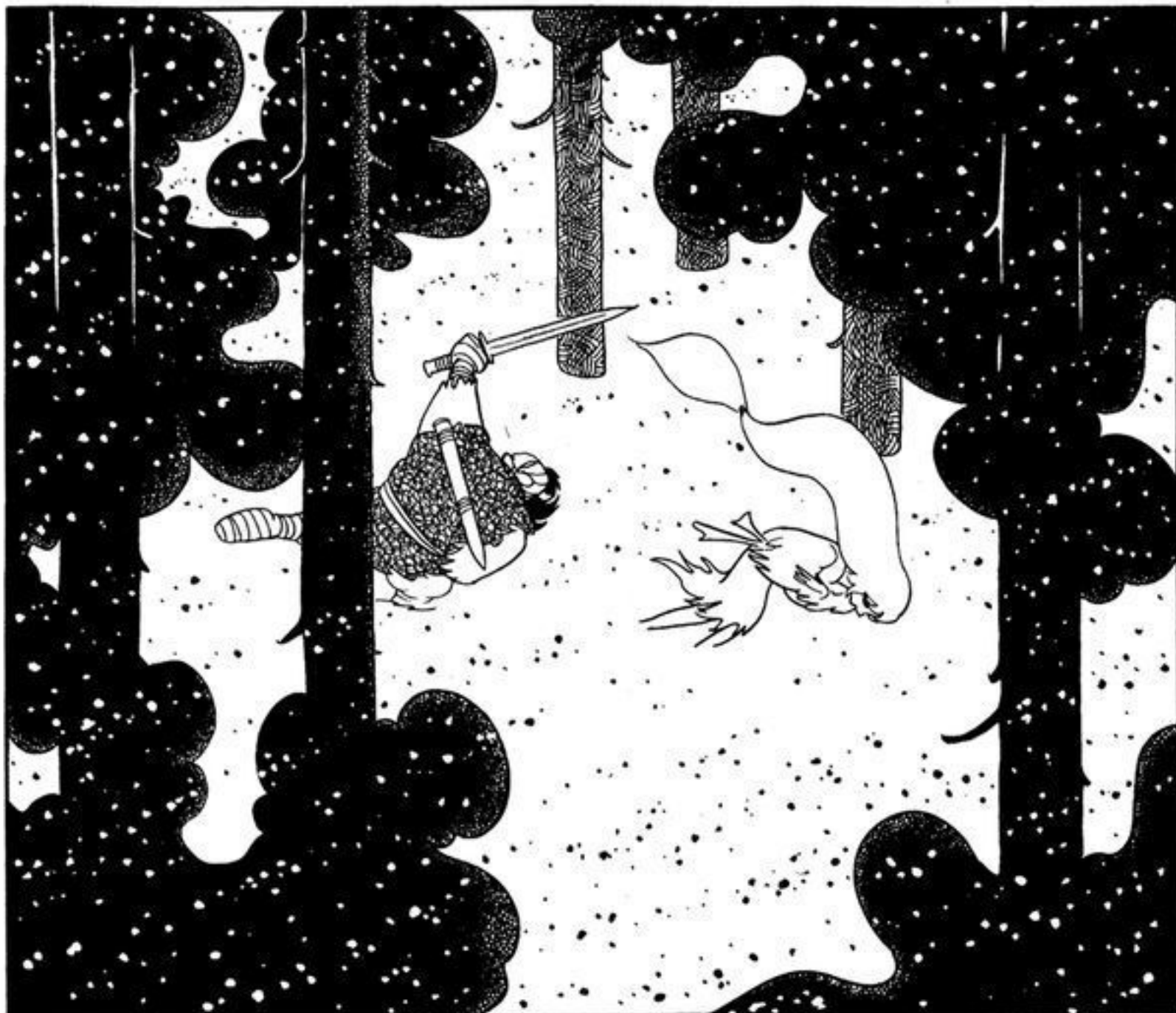




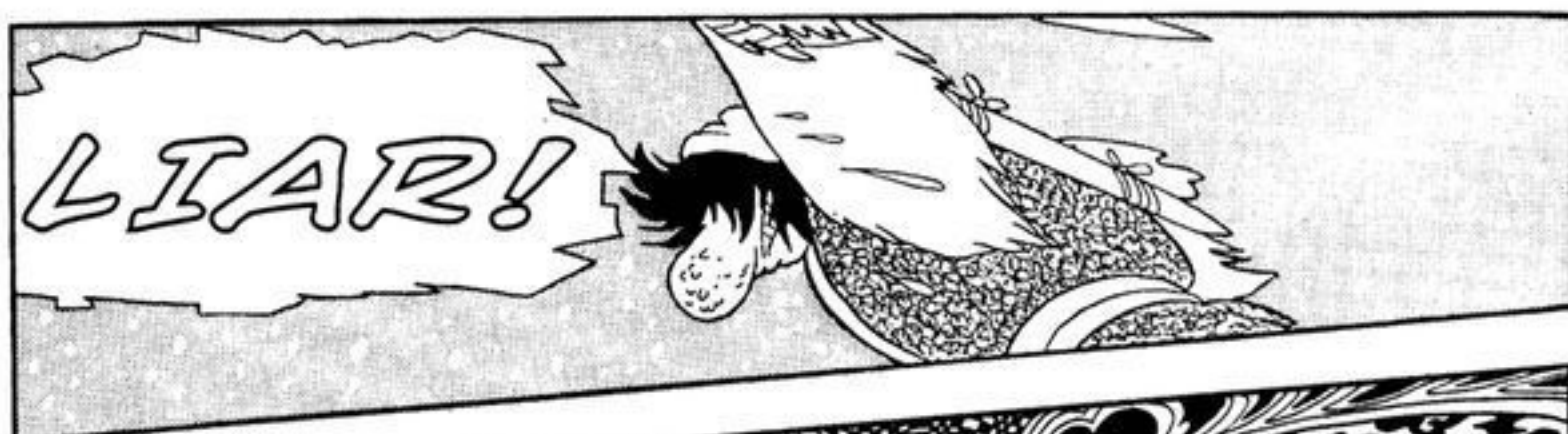








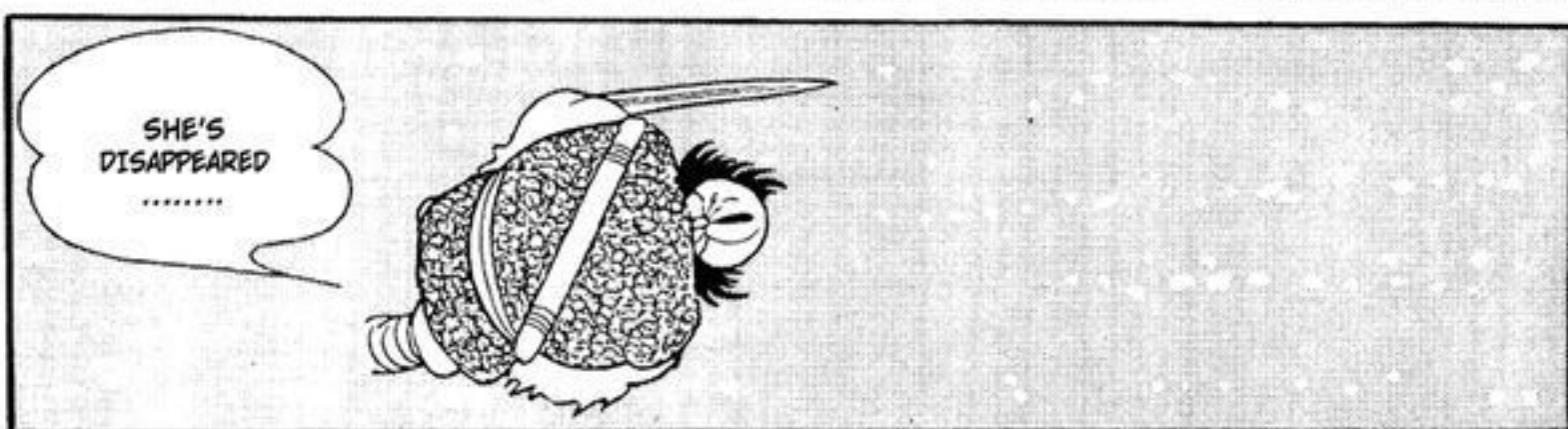
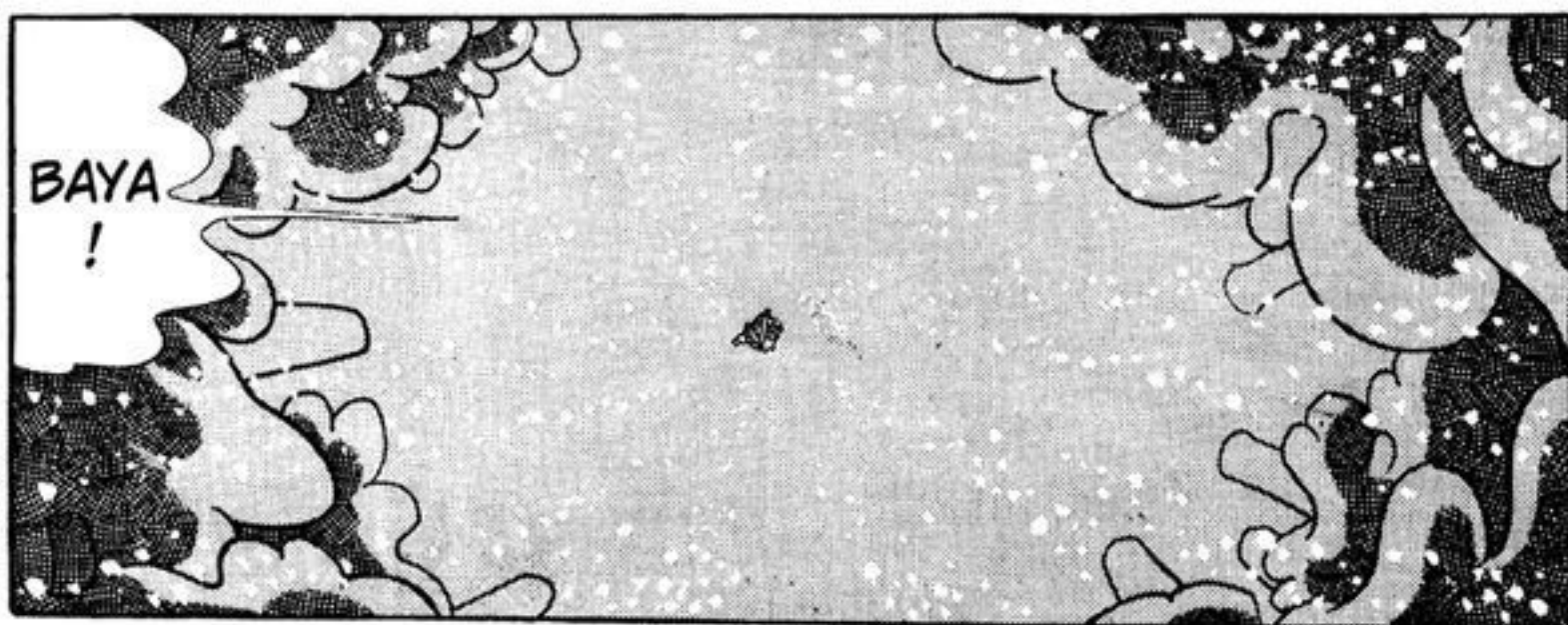
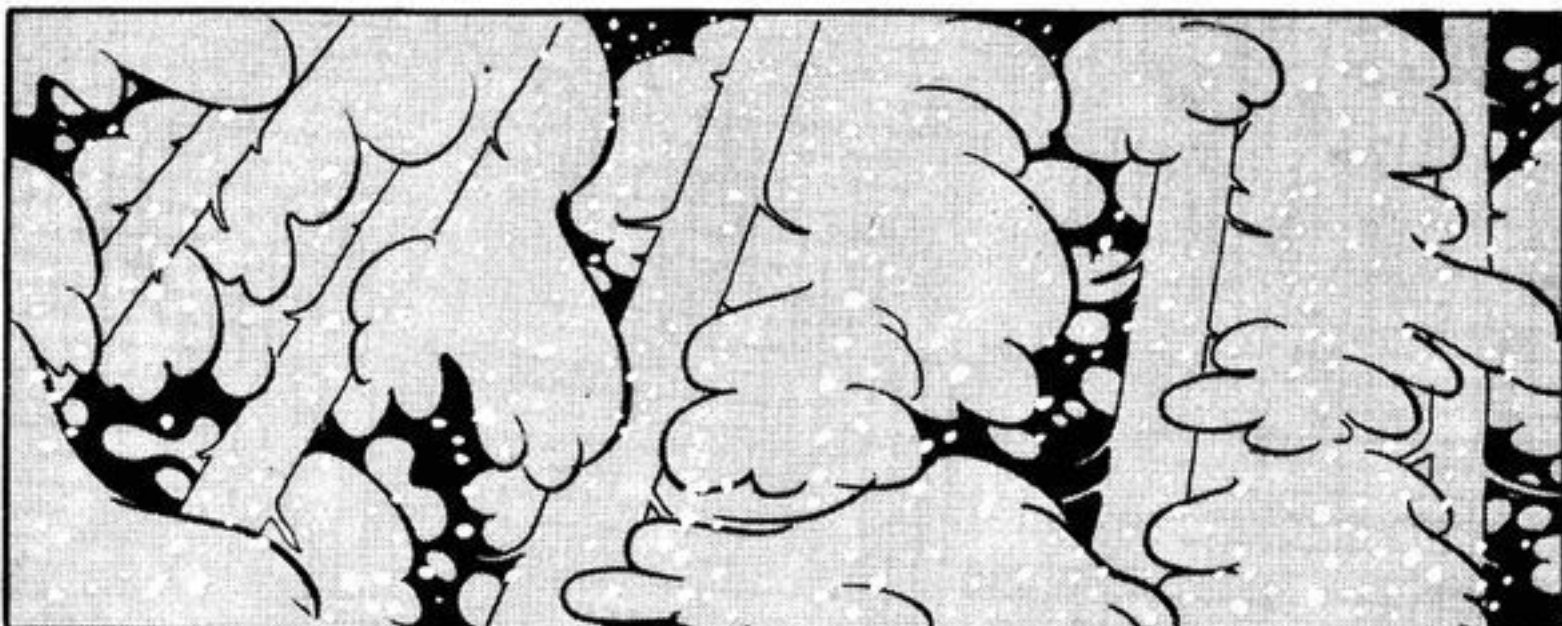




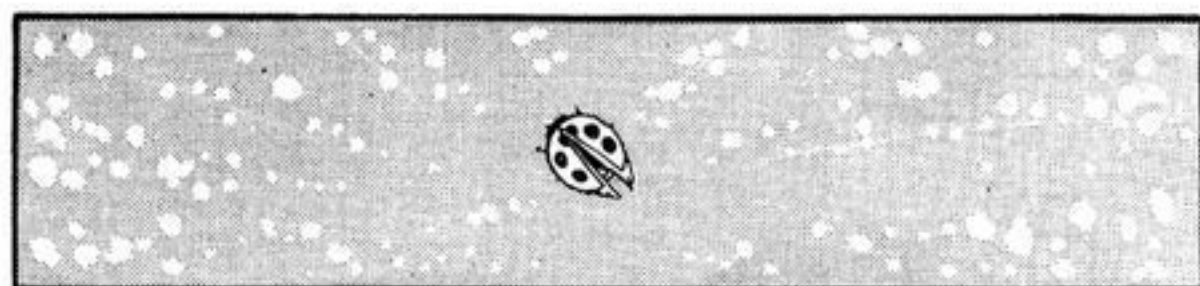
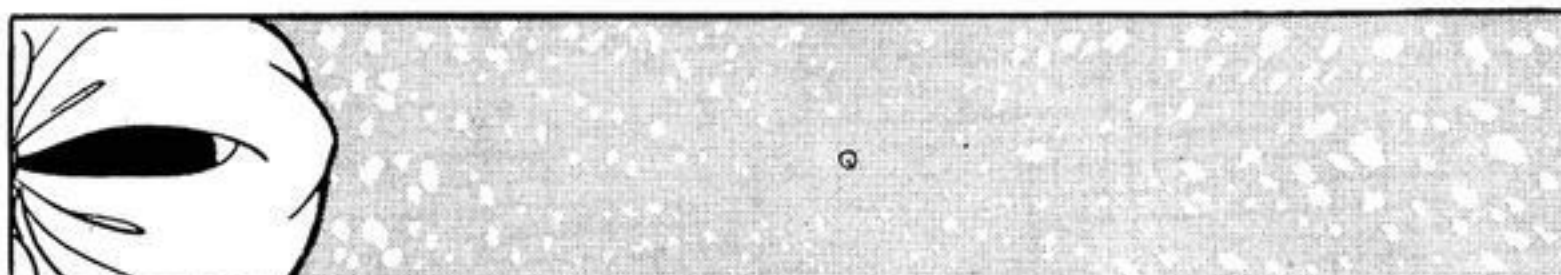
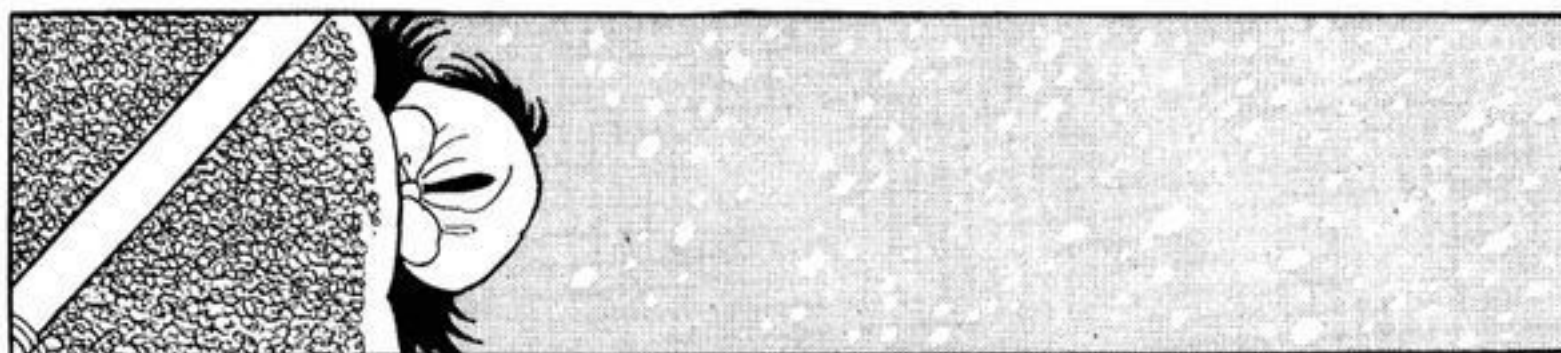




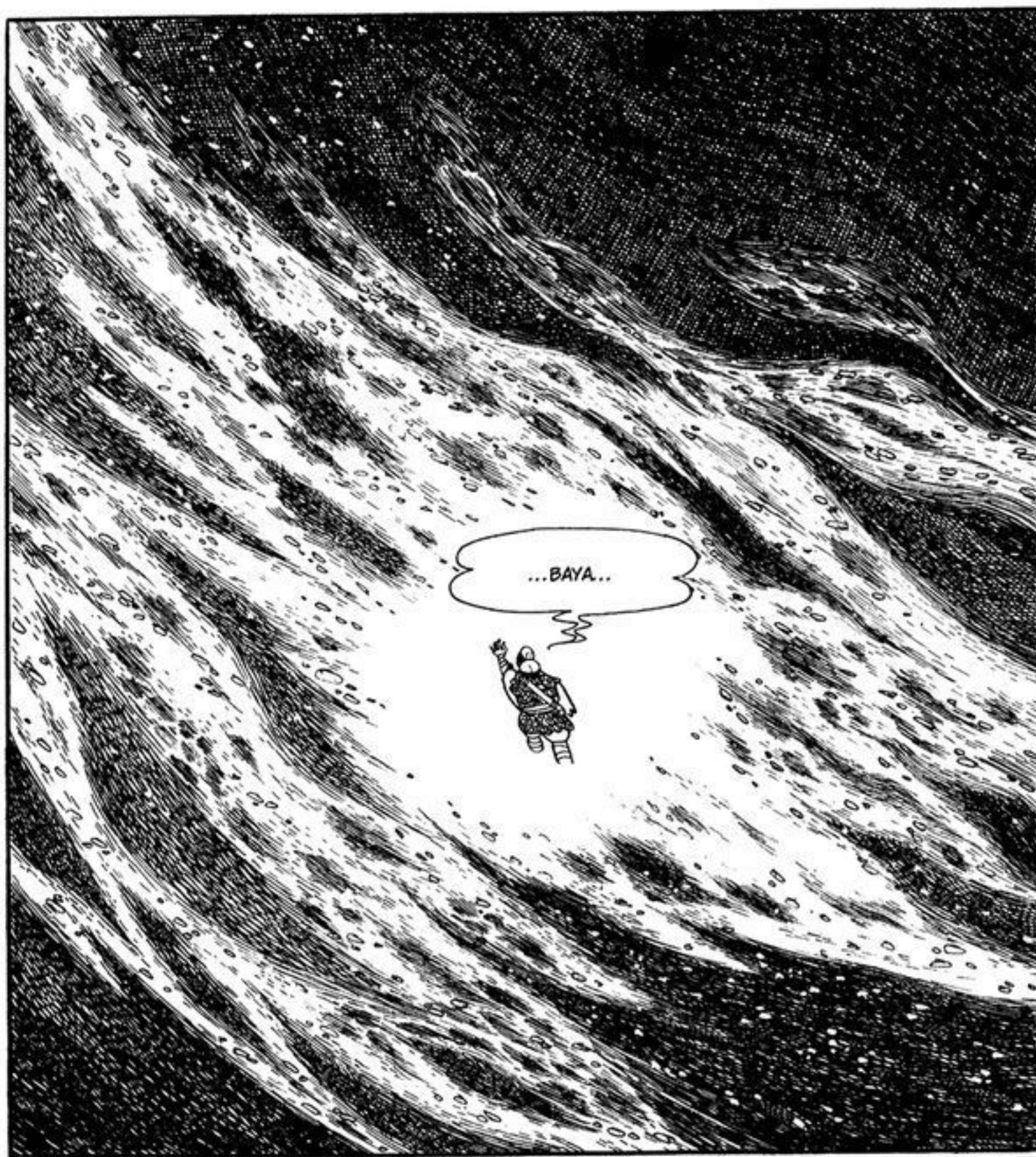
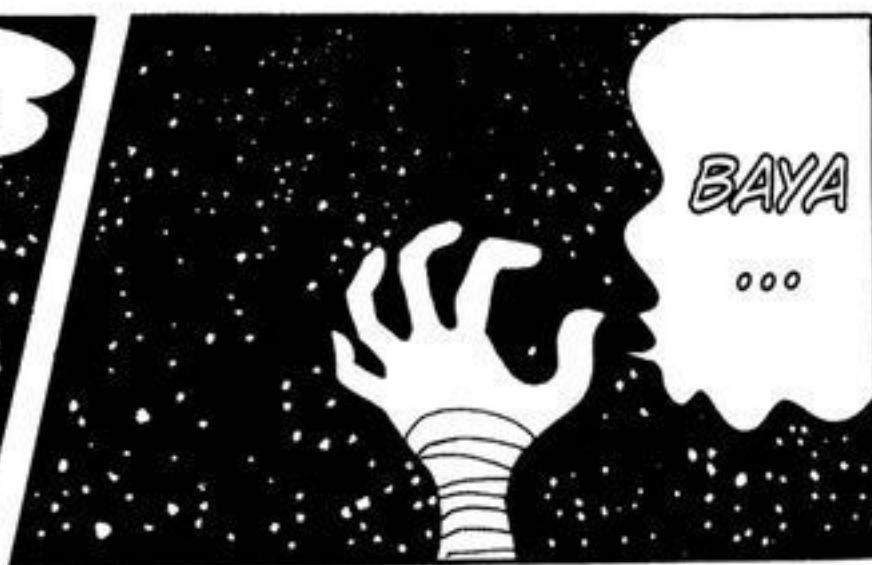




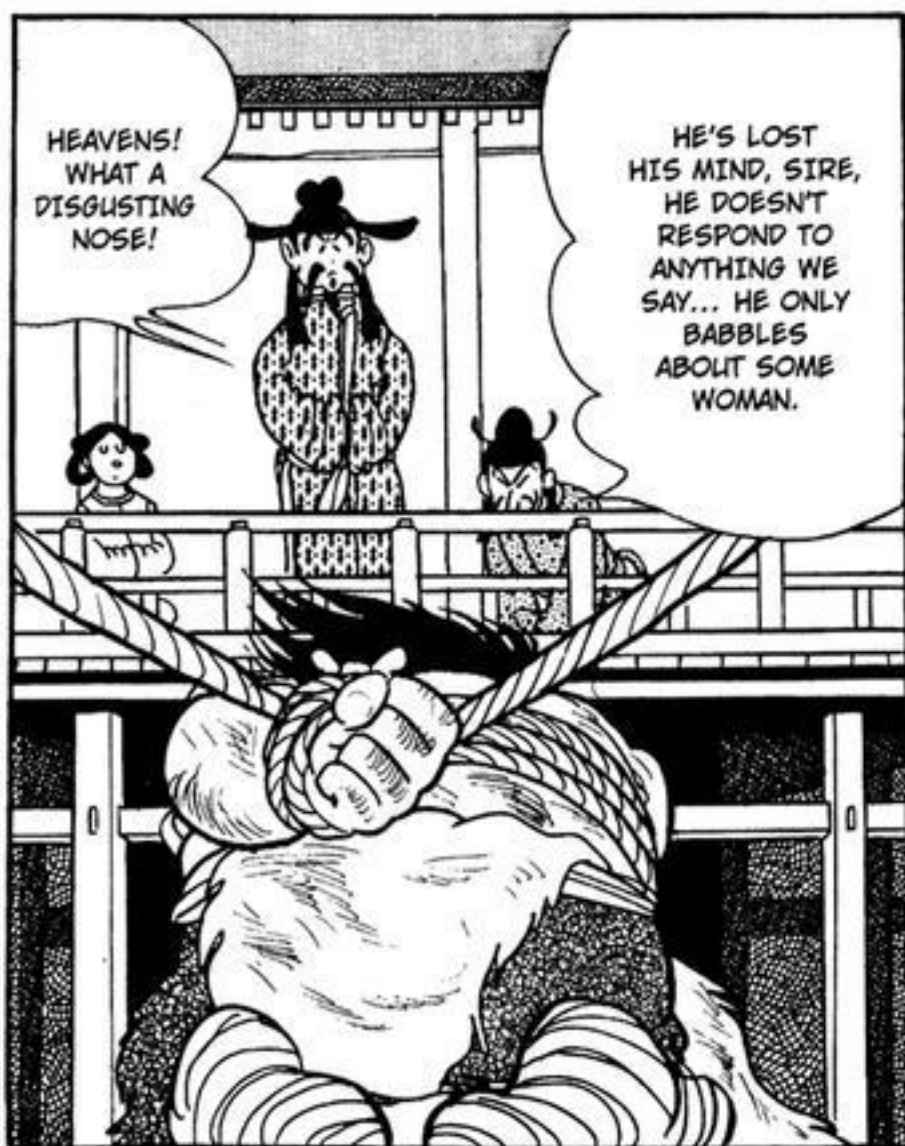




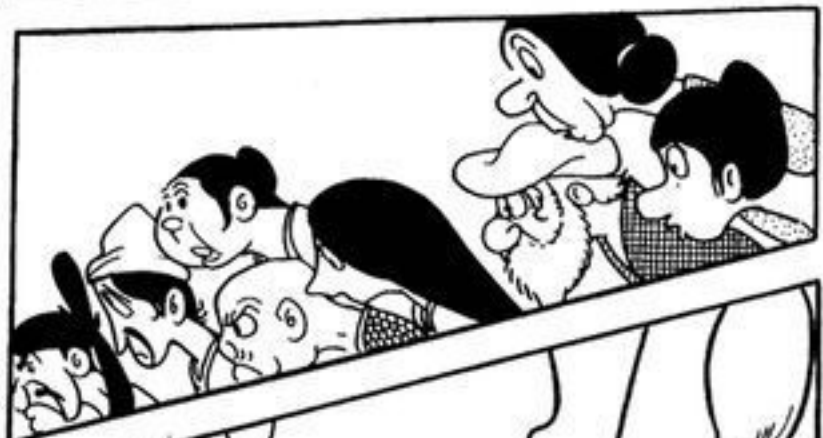
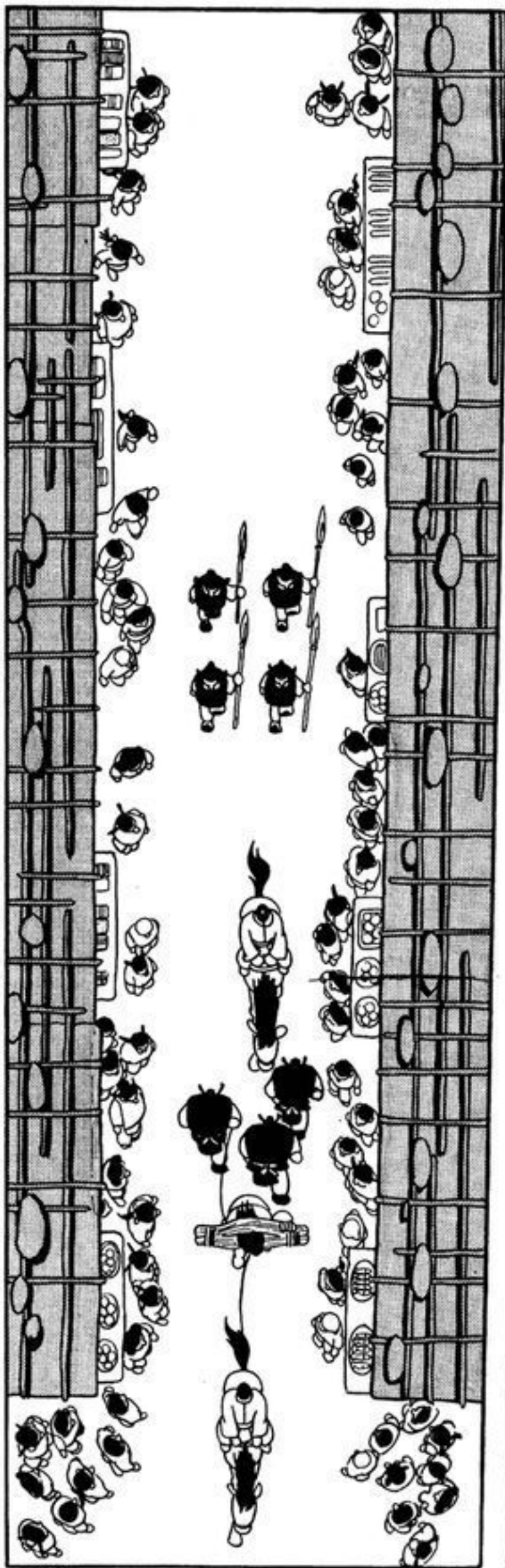




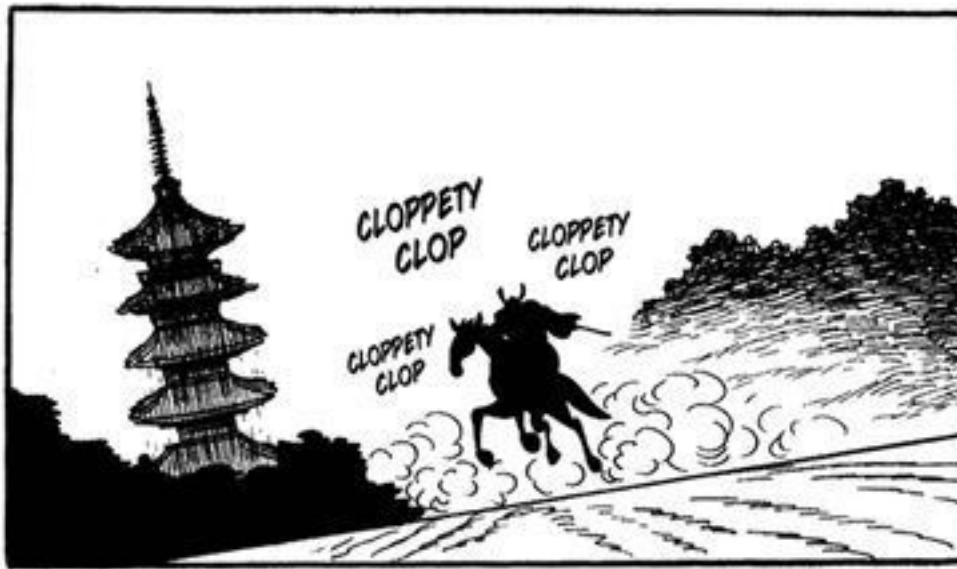




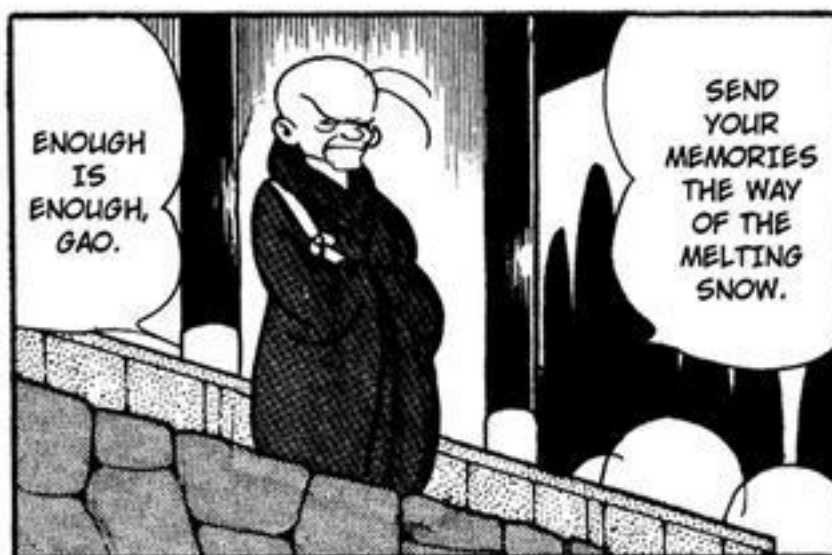






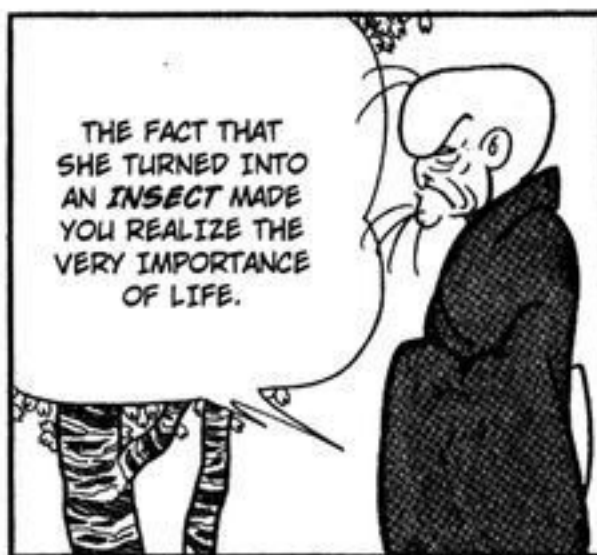






\*NIPPON: JAPAN

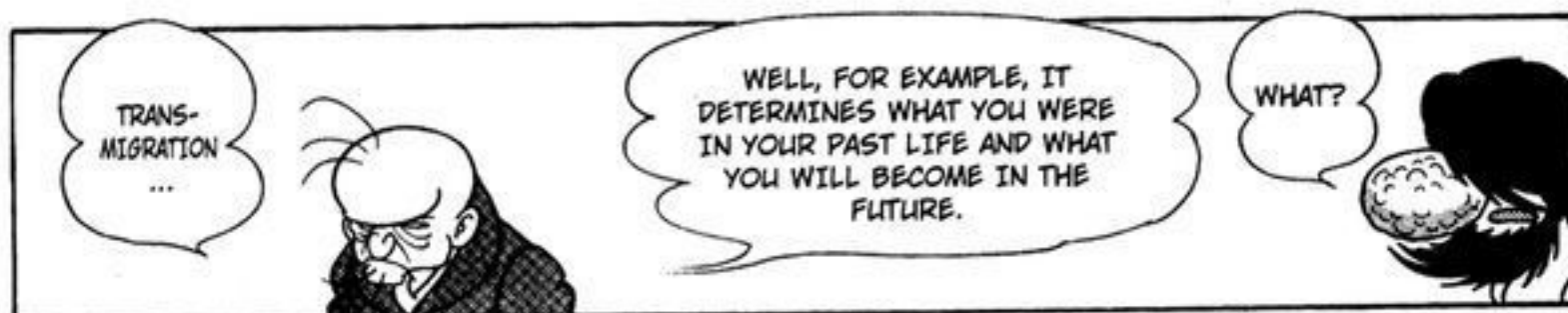




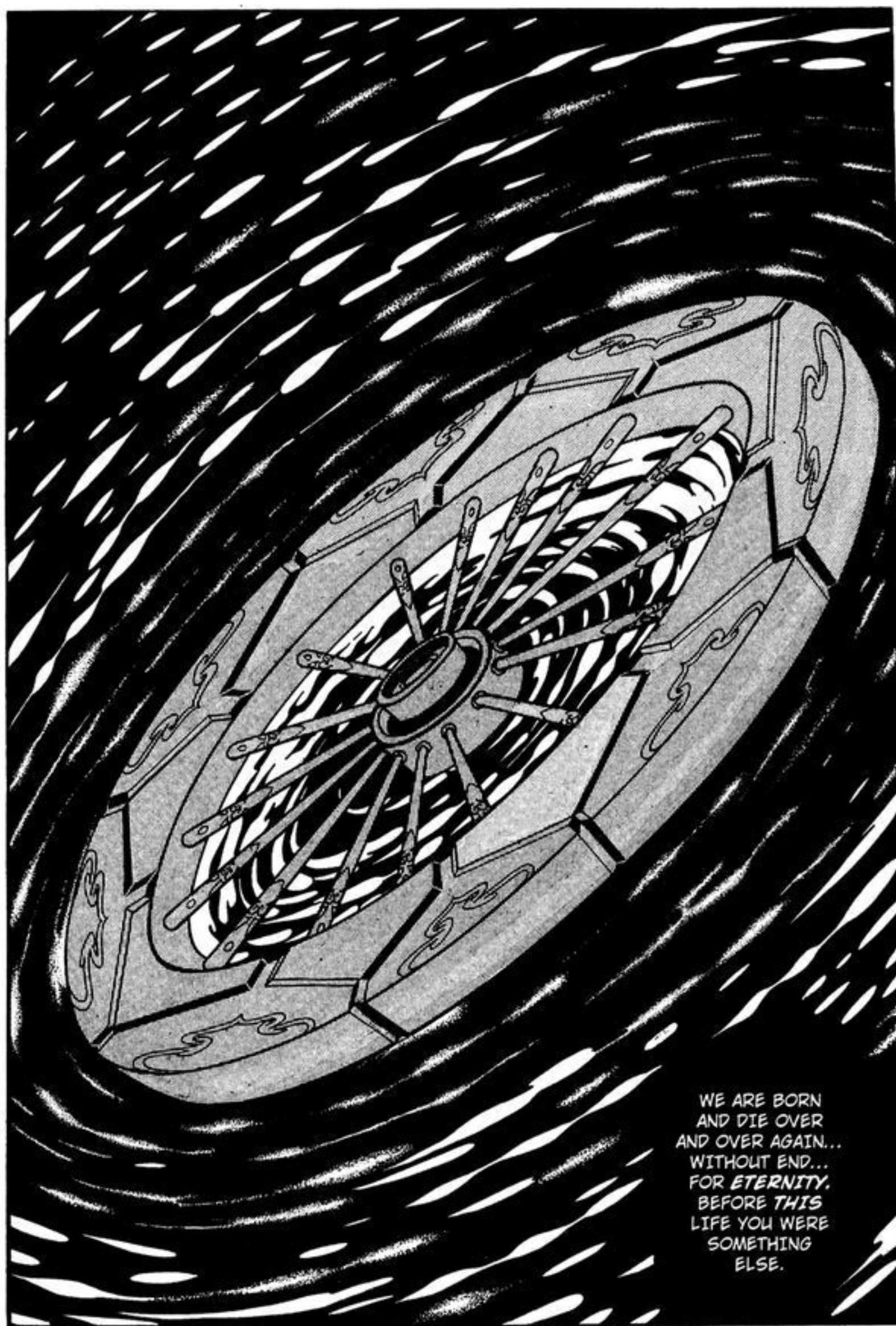












WE ARE BORN  
AND DIE OVER  
AND OVER AGAIN...  
WITHOUT END...  
FOR *ETERNITY*.  
BEFORE *THIS*  
LIFE YOU WERE  
SOMETHING  
ELSE.



FUNNY, I  
DON'T FEEL  
LIKE I WAS  
ALIVE BEFORE.



INTERESTING  
STORY! HAVE ANY  
IDEA WHO I'LL  
BECOME NEXT  
TIME AROUND?

GAO... YOU  
MAY NOT  
BE A HUMAN  
NEXT TIME.



THERE IS  
NO WAY YOU  
CAN KNOW...

WHEN YOU  
DIED IN YOUR  
FORMER  
LIVES, YOU  
COMPLETELY  
FORGOT  
EVERYTHING.

AND THE  
SAME WILL  
HAPPEN WHEN  
YOU DIE  
IN THIS LIFE.



YOU MAY  
BECOME AN  
OX, A HORSE,  
OR EVEN  
AN INSECT.

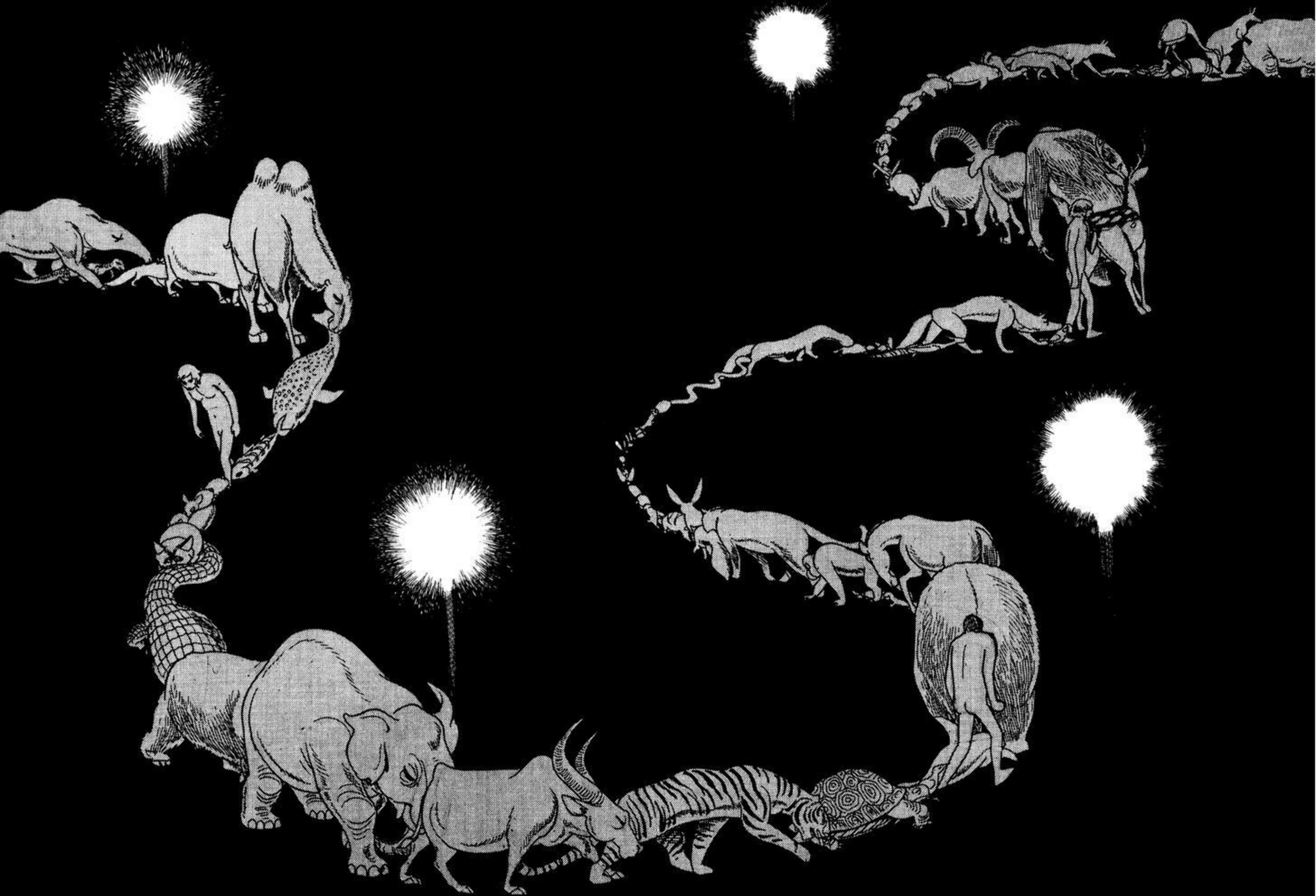




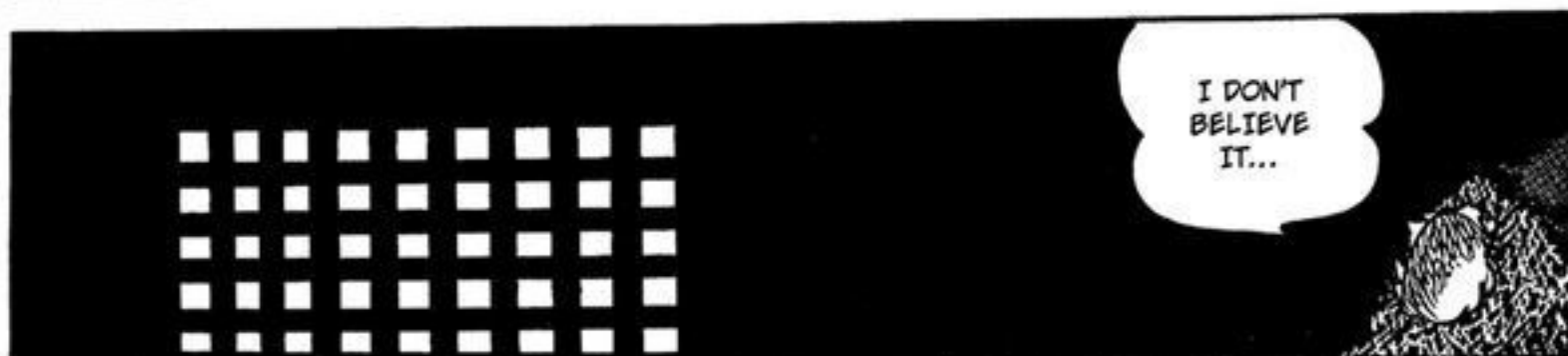
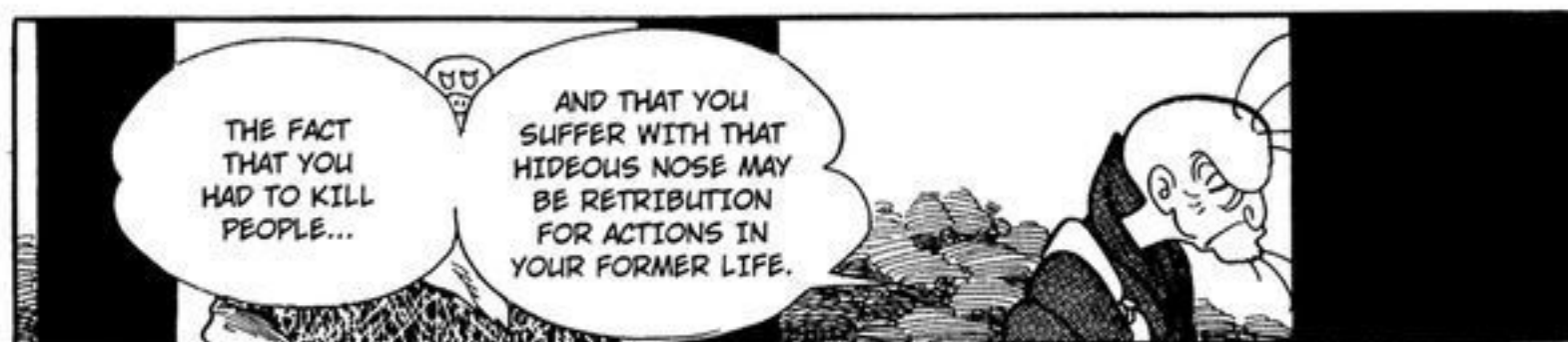
YOU CANNOT CONSCIOUSLY DETERMINE WHAT YOU  
WILL BE REBORN AS IN YOUR NEXT LIFE. BUT YOU  
WILL BE REWARDED FOR YOUR ACTIONS, AND THIS  
WILL DECIDE WHETHER YOU BECOME AN INSECT,  
FISH, REPTILE, ANIMAL, OR HUMAN. THE PROCESS  
CONTINUES ETERNALLY...











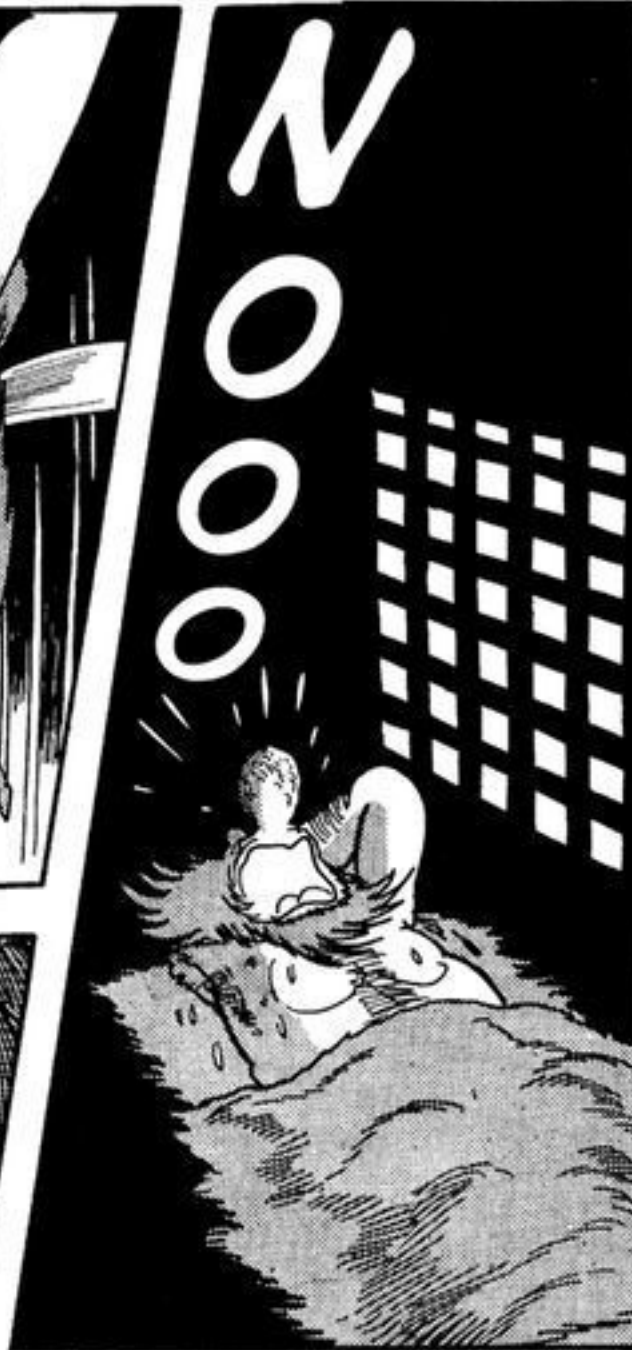
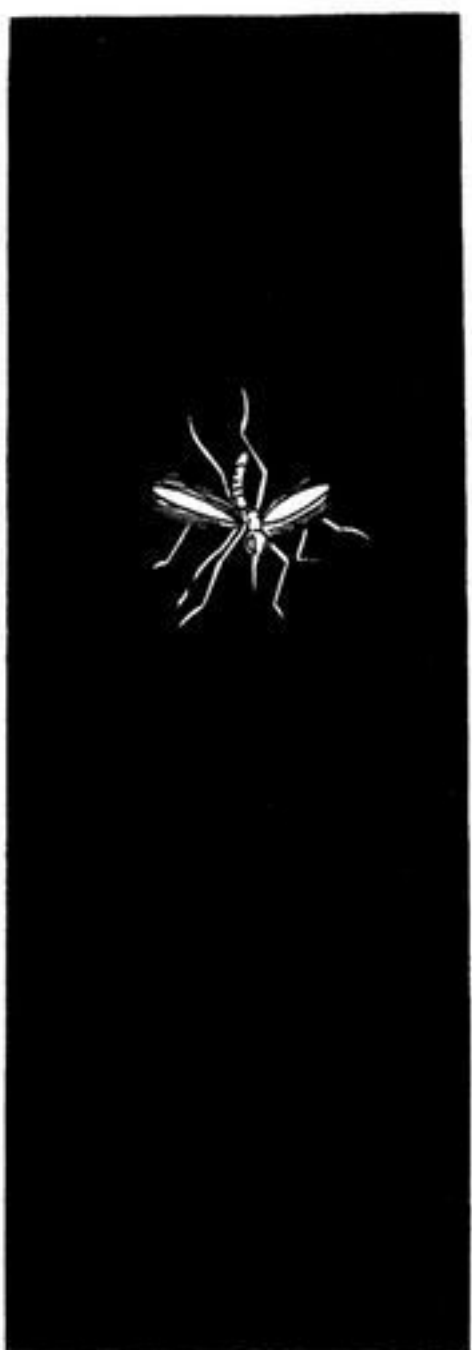
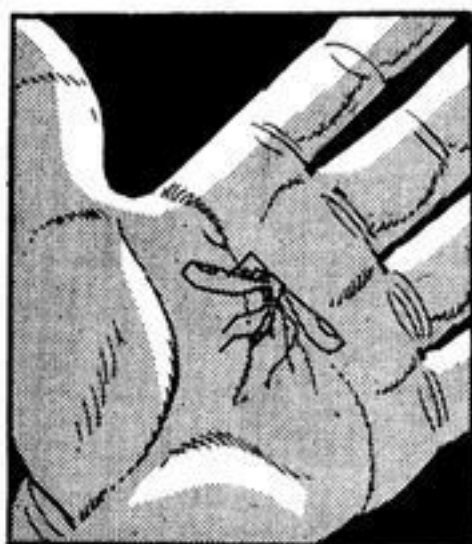


WELL, IF I  
WAS TO BE  
REBORN I'D  
LIKE TO BE  
SOMETHING  
OTHER THAN  
AN INSECT.

THE DAYFLY LIVES  
ONLY THREE DAYS,  
GAO, BUT THAT TOO  
MAY BE ITS KARMIC  
REWARD FOR A  
PREVIOUS LIFE'S  
ACTIONS.

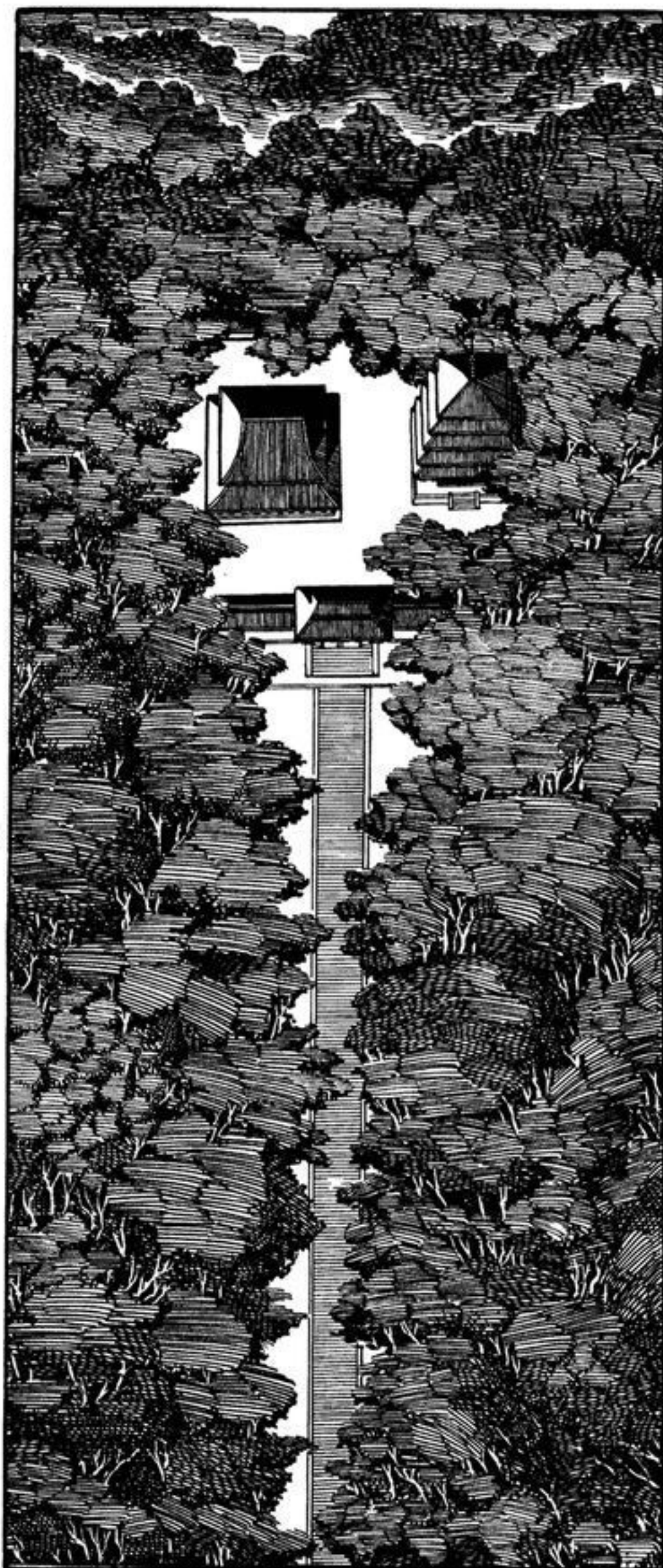




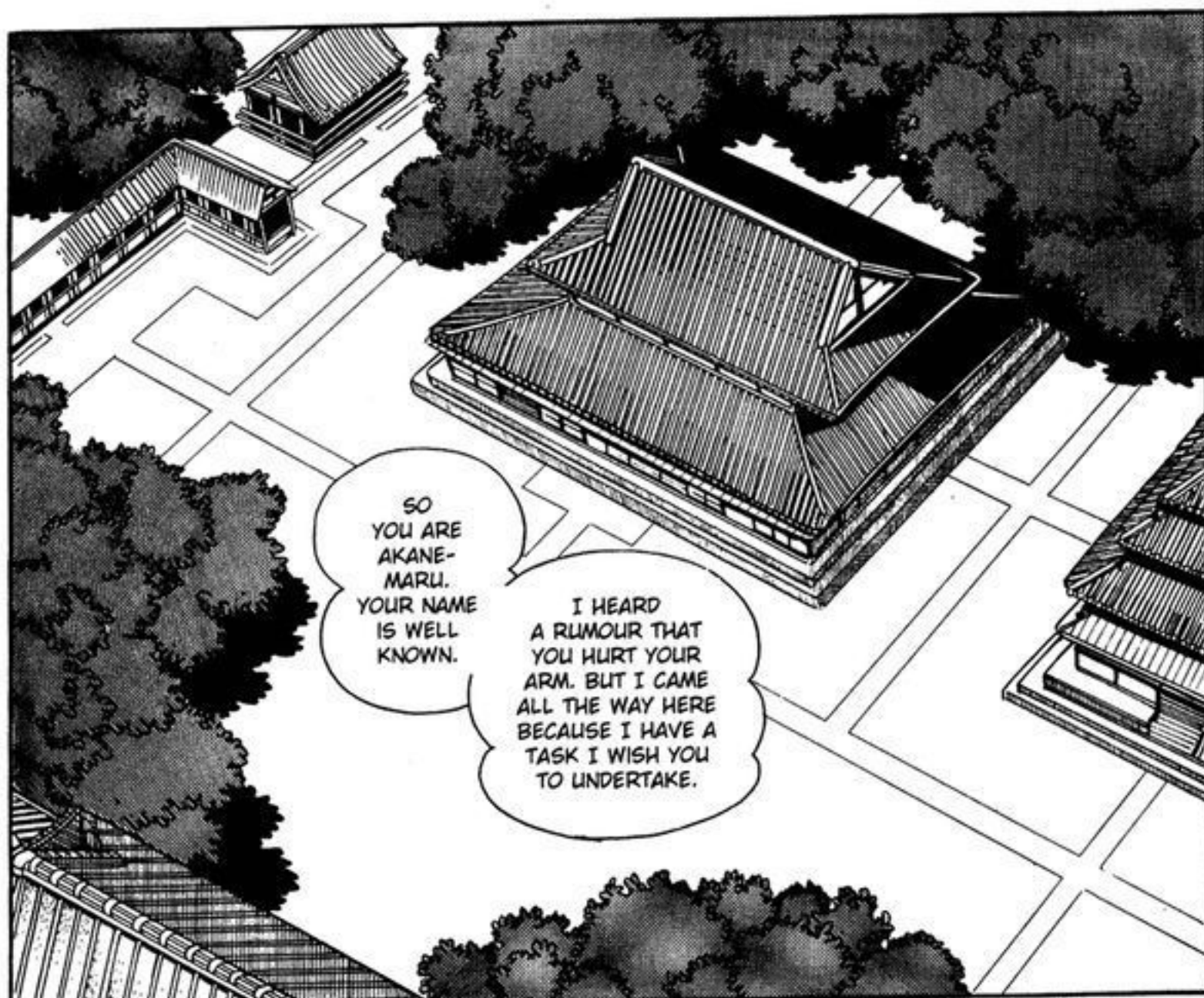




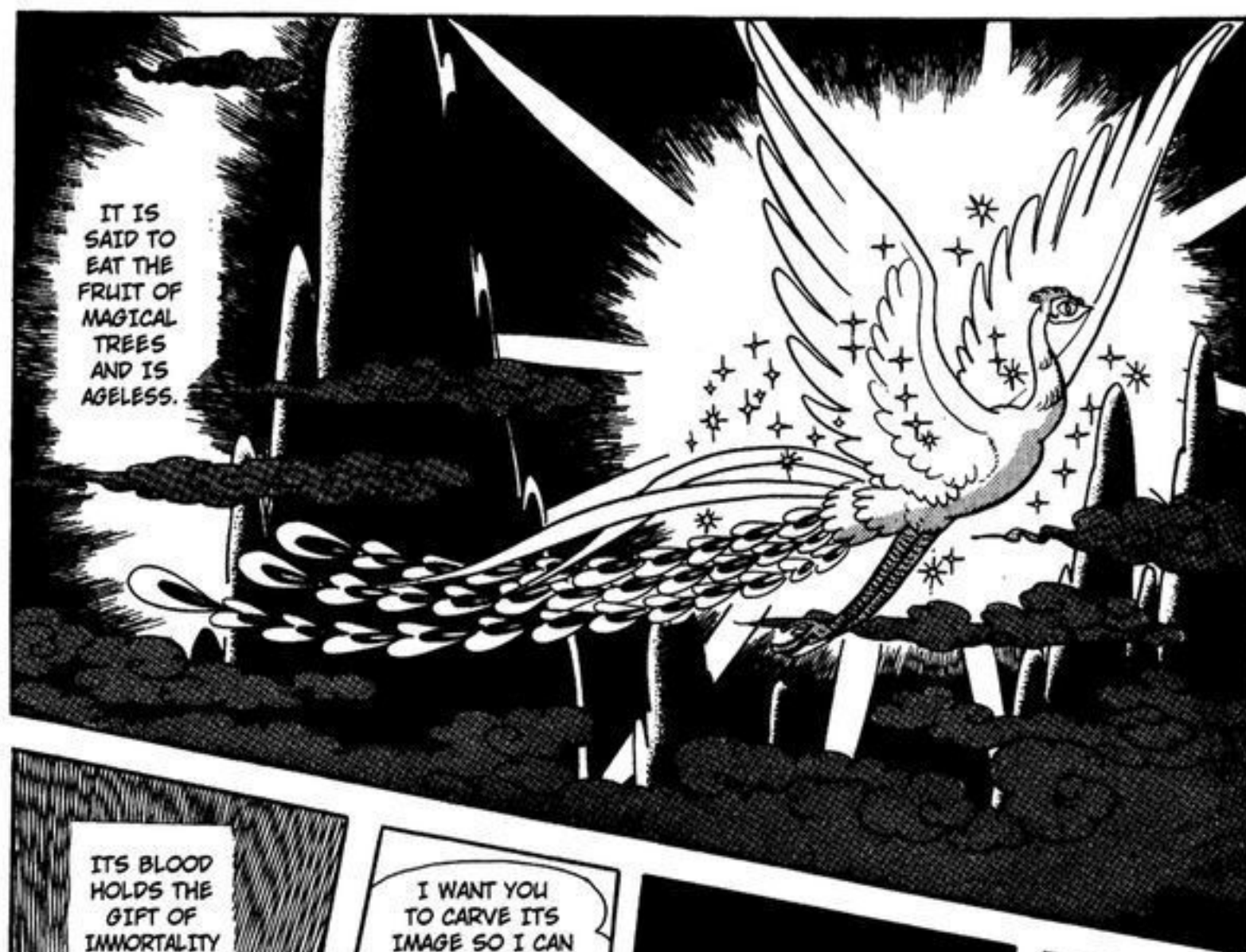
**NO!**  
**I WANT TO**  
**REMAIN A**  
**MAN! I**  
**DON'T WANT**  
**TO BE A**  
**BEAST**  
**OR A**  
**BUG!**  
**I'M**  
**HUMAN!**











IT IS  
SAID TO  
EAT THE  
FRUIT OF  
MAGICAL  
TREES  
AND IS  
AGELESS.



ITS BLOOD  
HOLDS THE  
GIFT OF  
IMMORTALITY  
FOR ANY  
MORTAL  
WHO  
DRINKS  
IT!

I WANT YOU  
TO CARVE ITS  
IMAGE SO I CAN  
COVER IT IN  
GOLD AND DISPLAY  
IT AS THE PRIDE  
OF MY TEMPLE.



SIR, I BEG YOUR  
FORGIVENESS, BUT I  
HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH  
A BIRD! BESIDES, MY  
ARM IS WEAK... I  
COULDN'T POSSIBLY  
PRODUCE THE STATUE  
YOU DESIRE!



SO...  
YOU  
REFUSE?









LAUGH!



HA  
HA  
HA

HEH  
HEH

HO  
HO

HA  
HA

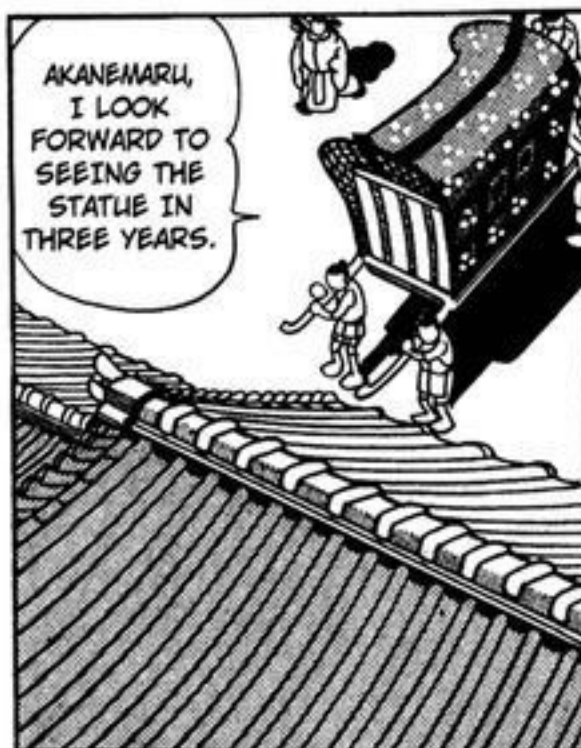
WHA  
HA



ENOUGH!



LET US BE  
GONE. THIS  
COUNTRY AIR  
IS FOUL.



AKANEMARU,  
I LOOK  
FORWARD TO  
SEEING THE  
STATUE IN  
THREE YEARS.



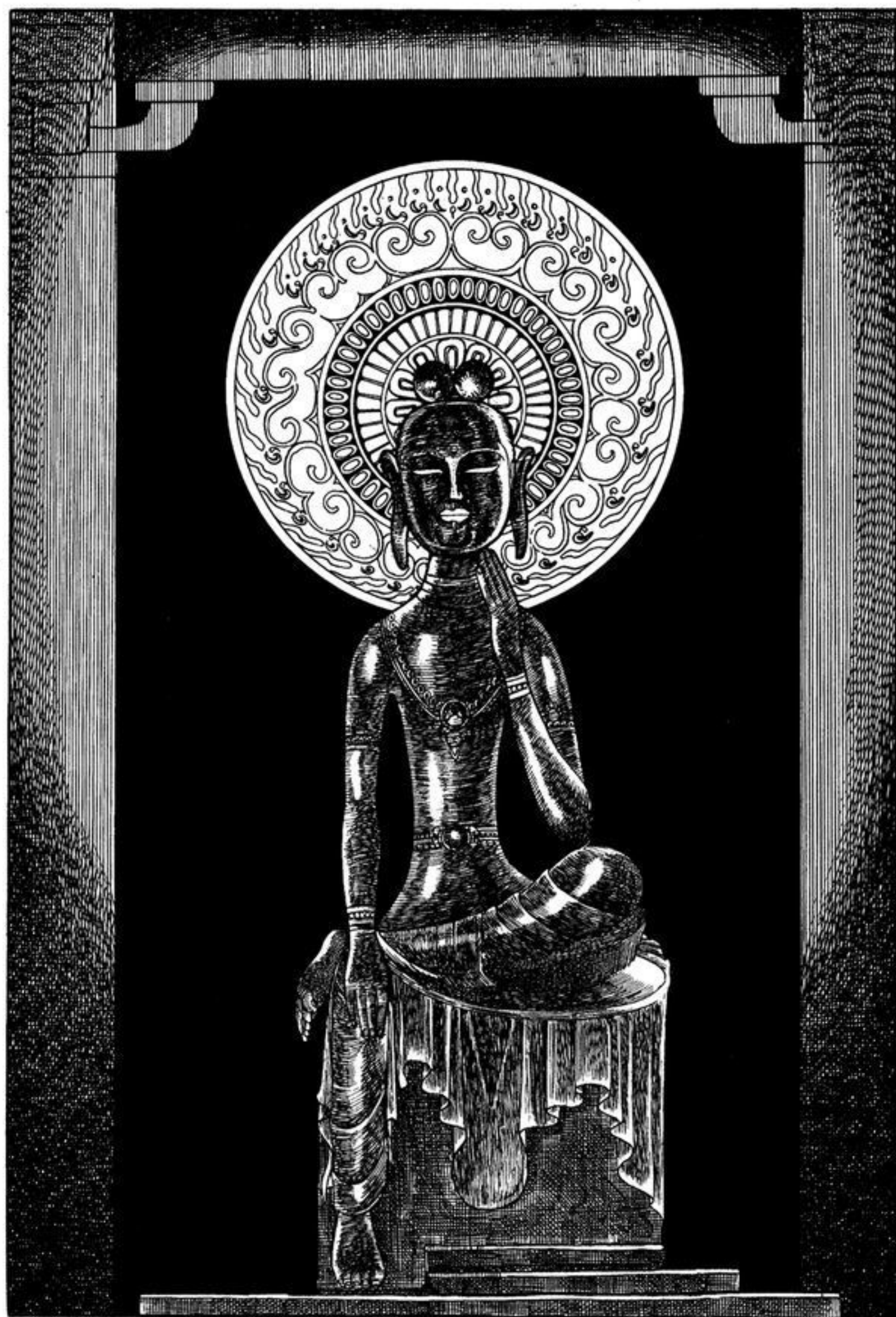
AH,  
AKANEMARU...  
SUCH AN  
UNREASON-  
ABLE  
TASK...

THIS IS THE WAY  
IT ALWAYS IS...  
MEN OF POWER  
ARE ALWAYS  
ARROGANT!!

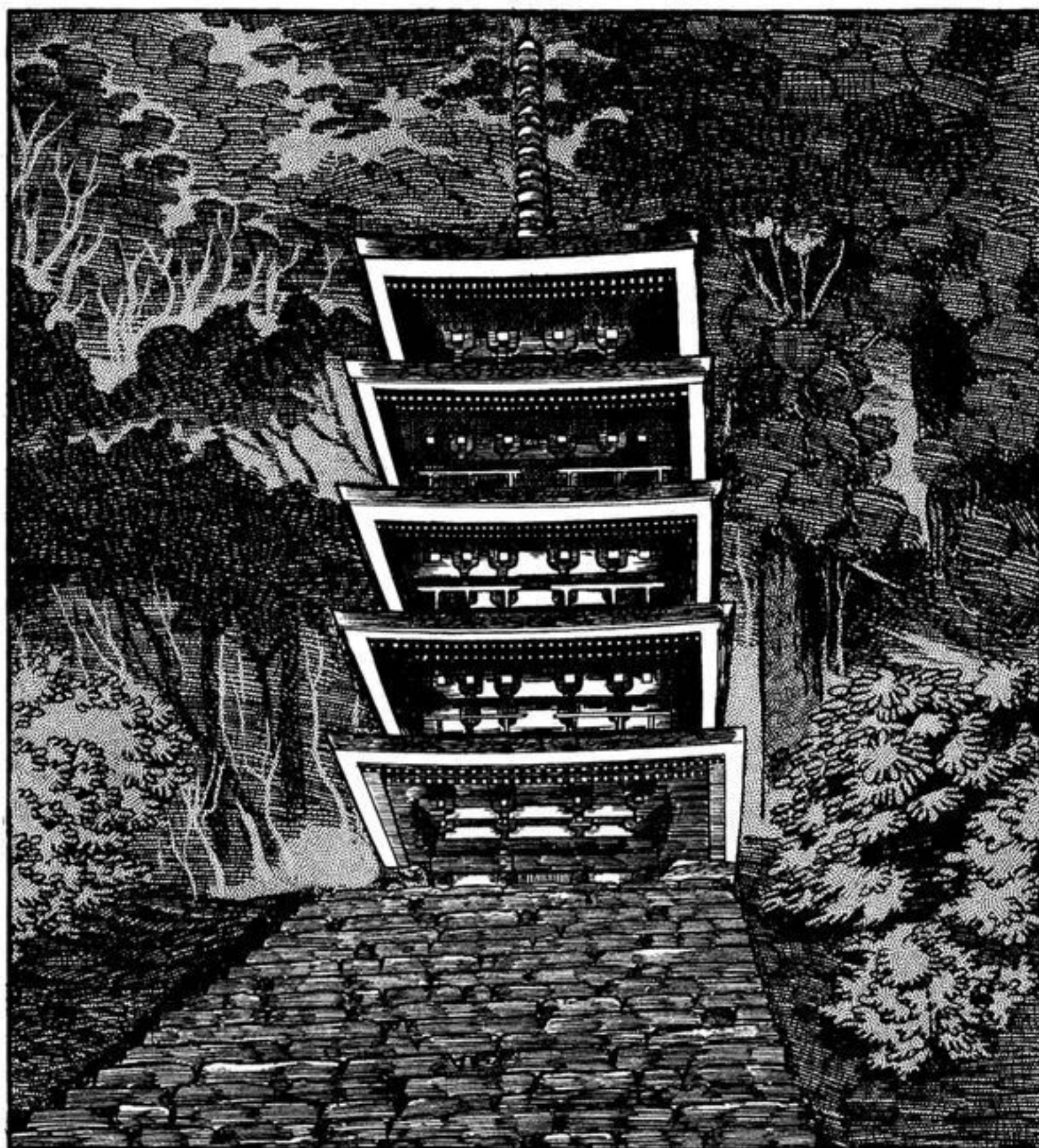
















WELL, HERE  
I AM AT  
THE  
CAPITAL.  
THE PLACE  
NEVER  
CHANGES.

PROSPERITY  
AND  
POVERTY  
...  
GAIETY AND  
GLOOM  
...  
THE SAME  
STRANGE  
CITY.

THIS IS THE CENTER  
OF POWER... EVERY-  
THING IS ALWAYS  
CONTROLLED BY  
OFFICIALS, LAND-  
LOADS AND MONEY.

I DESPISE THE  
ARROGANCE AND  
CONCEIT OF THIS  
PLACE...

IT DOESN'T  
AGREE WITH  
MY NATURE.

EVERYTHING  
HERE IS  
FALSE.

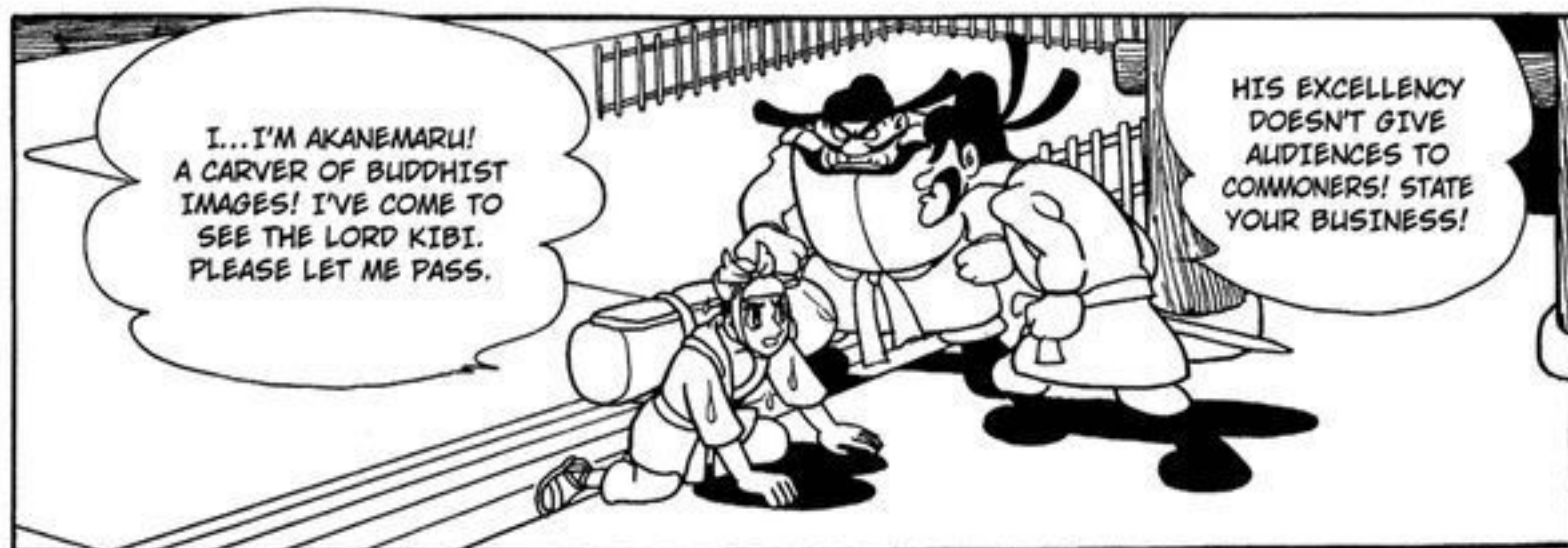
BUT I  
NEED THE  
CITY NOW...

FOR  
THE  
PHOENIX  
!

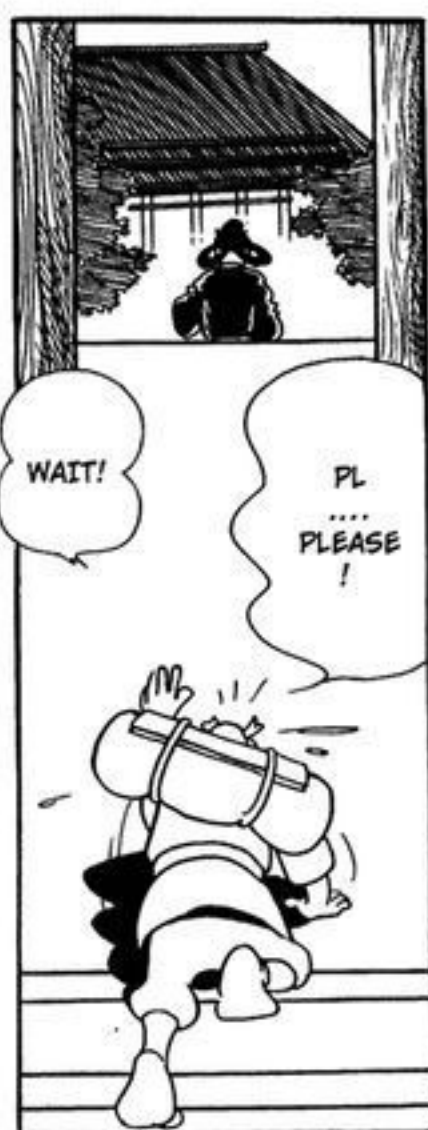
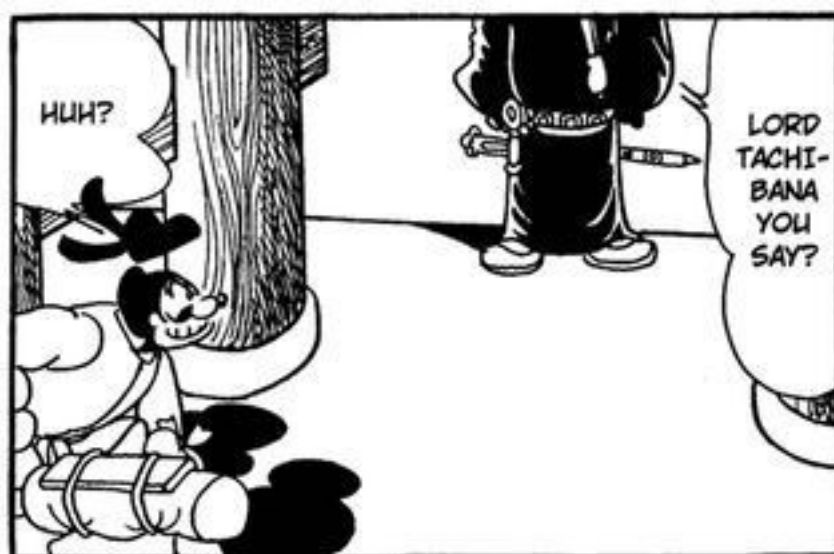
I HAVE TO  
FIND SOME  
REFERENCE  
TO THE  
PHOENIX...

...  
EVEN IF I  
HAVE TO  
SEARCH  
EVERY  
TEMPLE  
LIBRARY IN  
THE CITY.

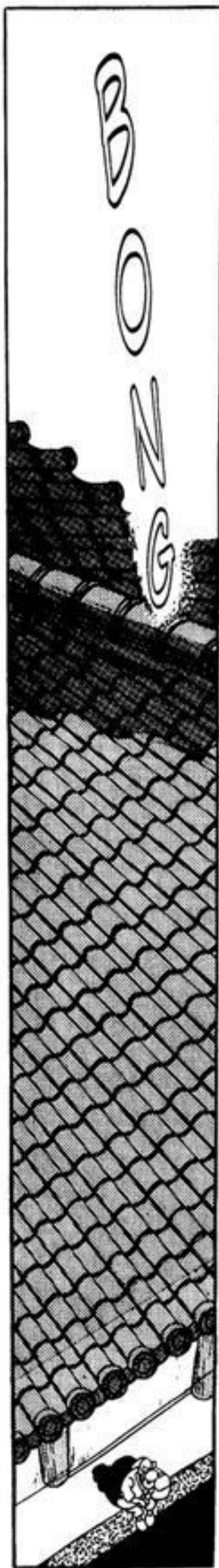
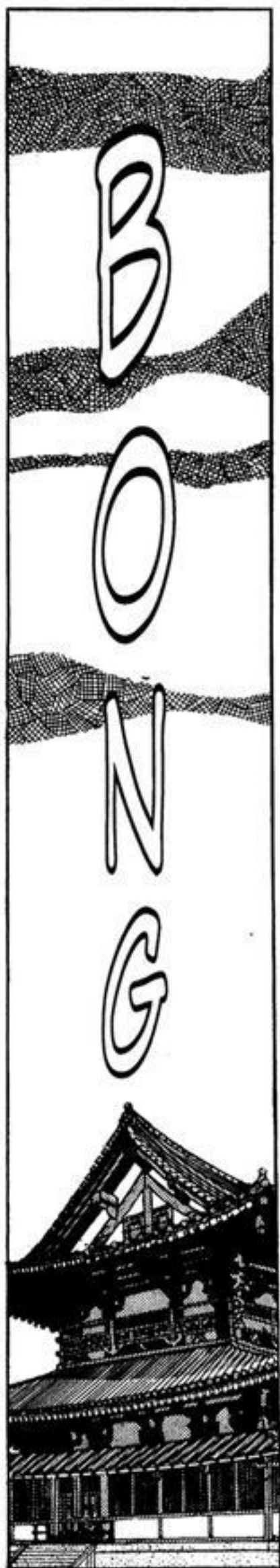
















EXCUSE  
ME SIR,  
BUT ARE  
YOU BY  
ANY CHANCE  
AKANEMARU,  
THE WOOD  
CARVER?



I'VE BEEN  
AN ADMIRER  
OF YOUR  
WORK FOR  
YEARS...

BUT I  
ALMOST  
DIDN'T  
RECOGNIZE  
YOU, YOU'VE  
GROWN  
SO THIN.



WELL,  
TO TELL  
YOU THE  
TRUTH...

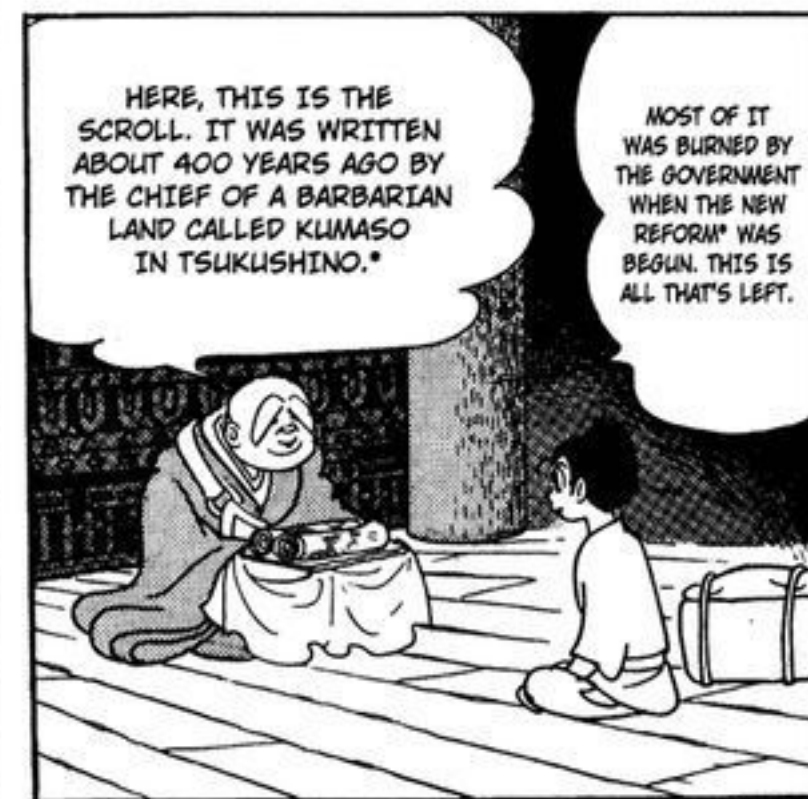


AN IMMORTAL  
BIRD CALLED  
THE PHOENIX,  
EH? HMMM...  
I DON'T KNOW  
WHETHER THIS  
WILL HELP  
YOU OR NOT...

BUT  
IN THE  
LIBRARY OF MY  
TEMPLE, THERE'S  
AN OLD SCROLL  
THAT MENTIONS  
SUCH A  
THING...

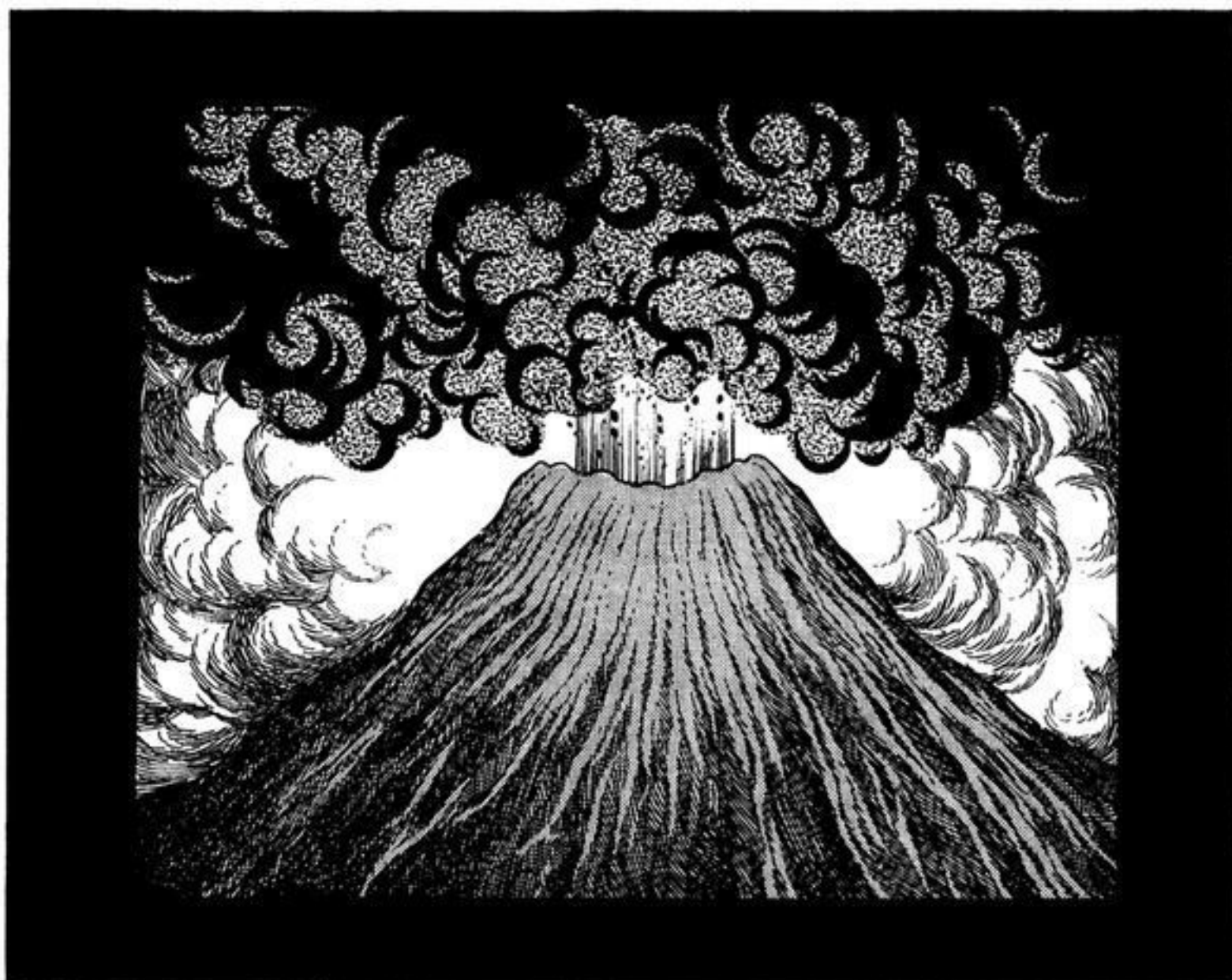
AND  
SOMETHING  
ABOUT  
IMMORTALITY.



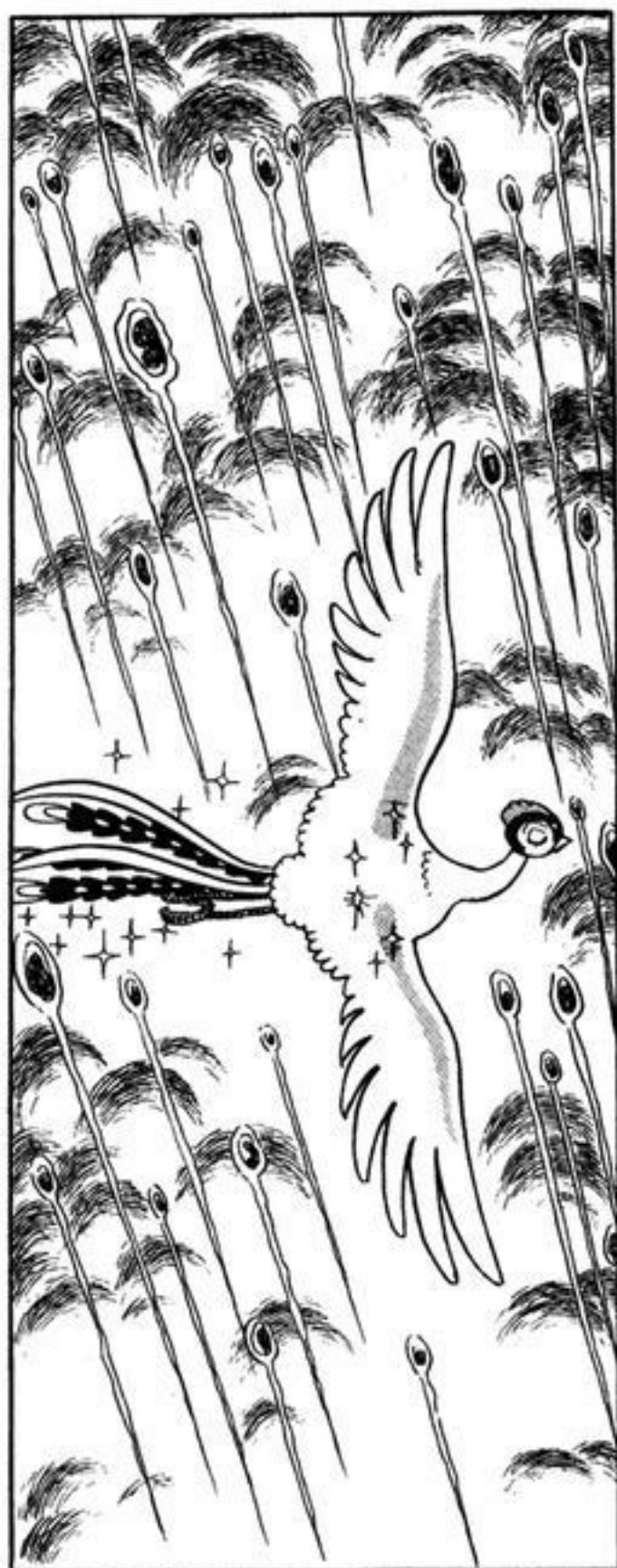
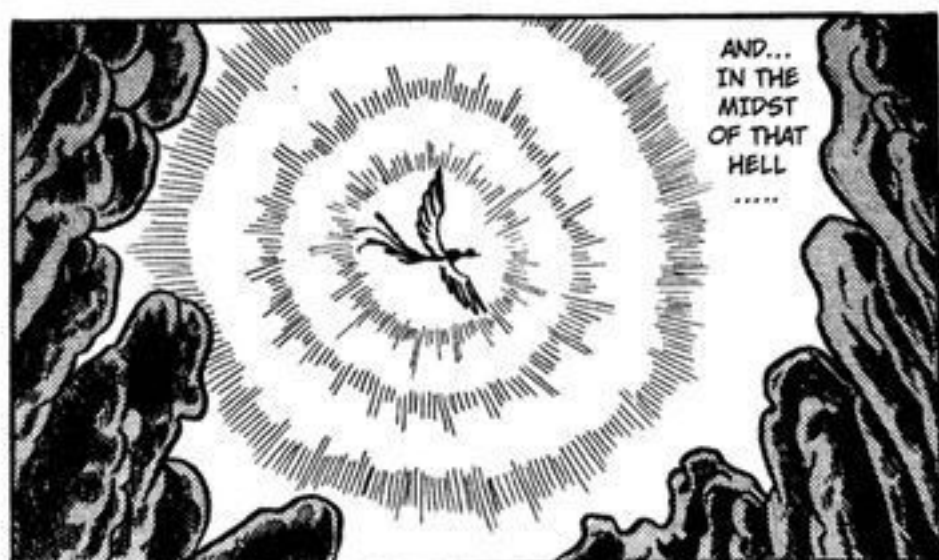


\*TSUKUSHINO: A LOCALE WHICH IS TODAY KUMAMOTO AND FUKUOKA PREFECTURES ON THE ISLAND OF KYUSHU.  
 \*ANCIENT JAPAN UNDERWENT NUMEROUS GOVERNMENTAL REFORMS AS ITS LEADERS TRIED TO COPY THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHINA.

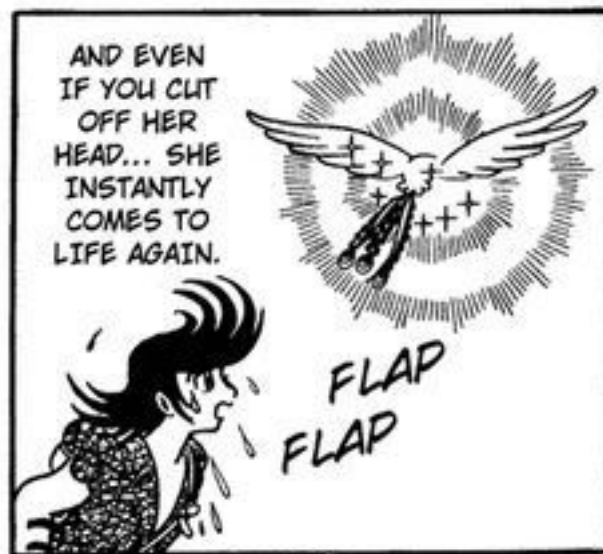
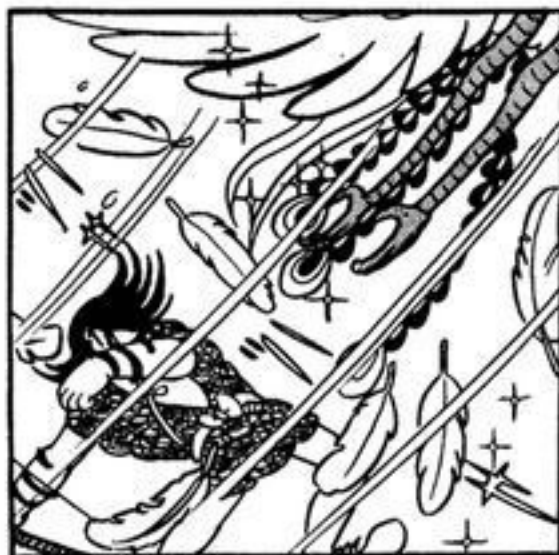
















WHEN ANGERED  
HER BODY GIVES  
FORTH FLAMES  
THAT DESTROY  
HER ATTACKERS...!



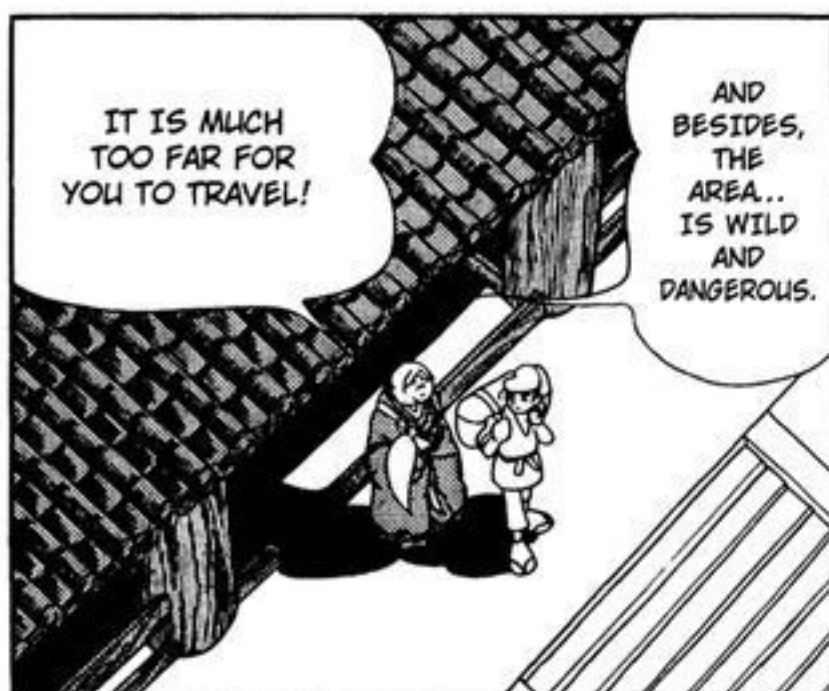
SHE GLOWS  
AT NIGHT....  
UNDERSTANDS MAN'S  
LANGUAGES AND  
KNOWS ALL... SHE  
IS A MESSENGER  
OF GOD...



THE...  
TH...

THIS  
IS THE  
BIRD!!

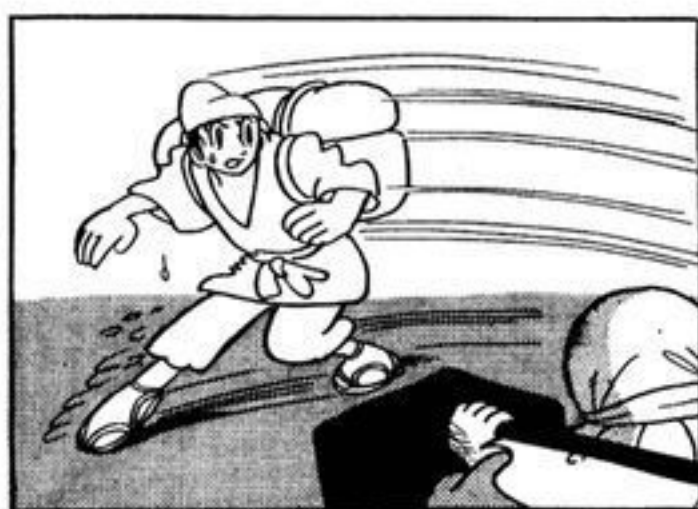
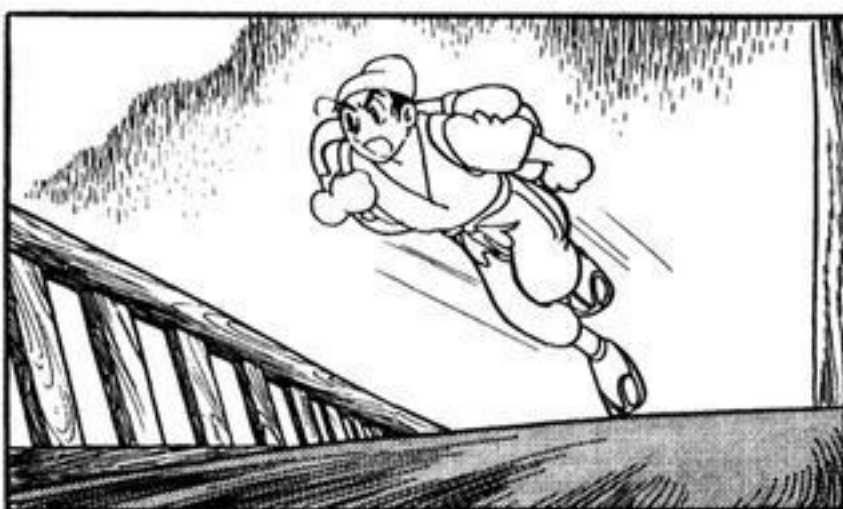
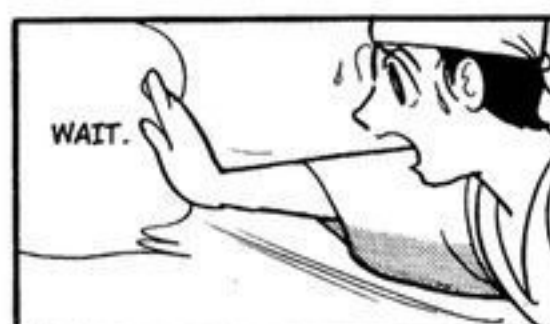
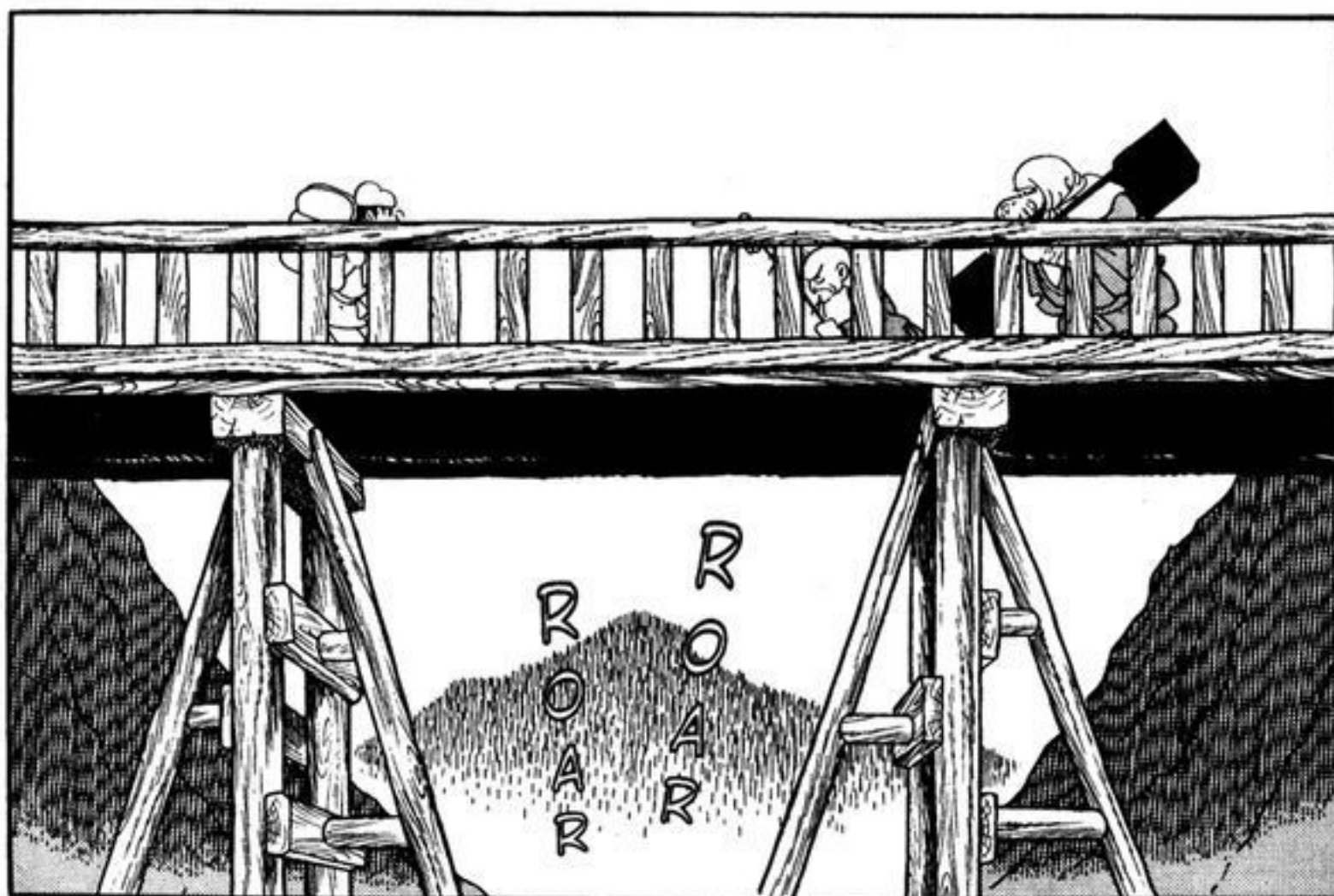






















WHAT  
?

THAT'S  
RIGHT! I'M  
SPINELESS,  
YOU FOOL!  
AND A  
COWARD AS  
WELL!

I'M  
BUSY TRYING  
TO STAY  
ALIVE AND I  
COULDN'T  
GIVE A DAME  
ABOUT YOU!

ARE YOU  
TRYING TO  
MAKE A  
FOOL OUT  
OF ME?

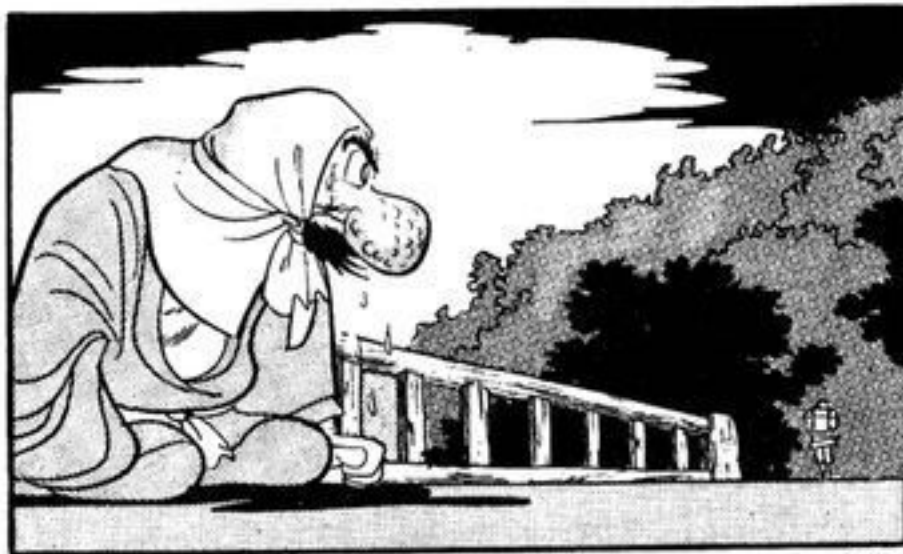
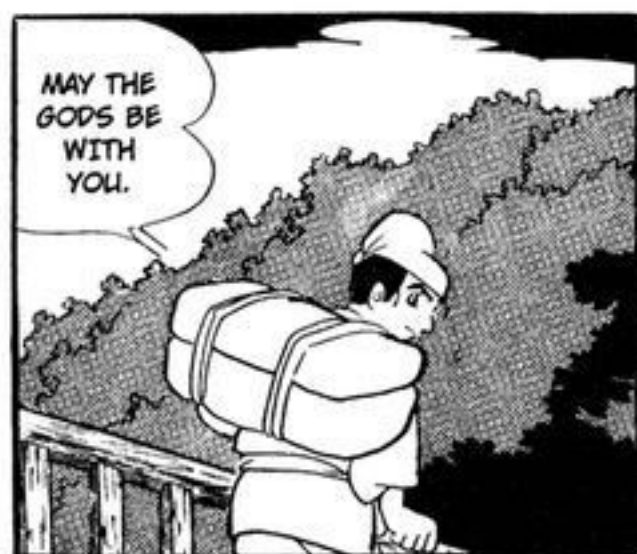
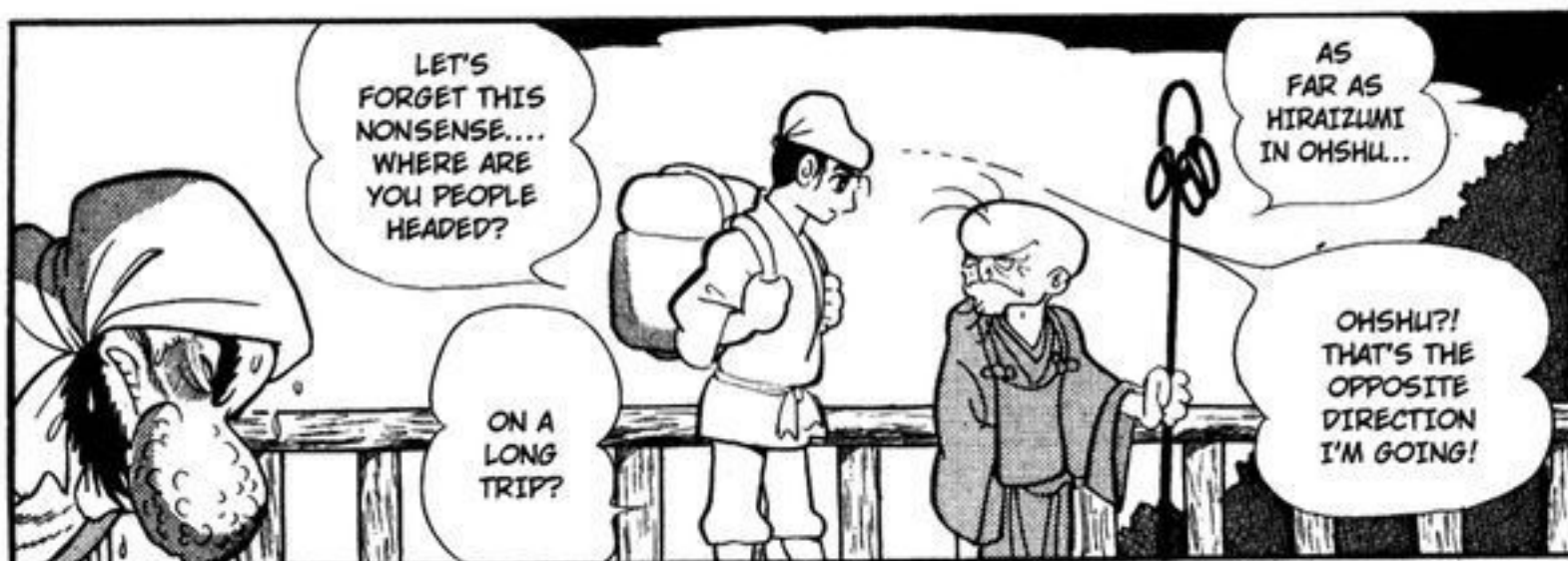
PICK UP THAT  
KNIFE! HERE  
I AM!  
HERE'S  
YOUR  
CHANCE FOR  
REVENGE!

DAMN.

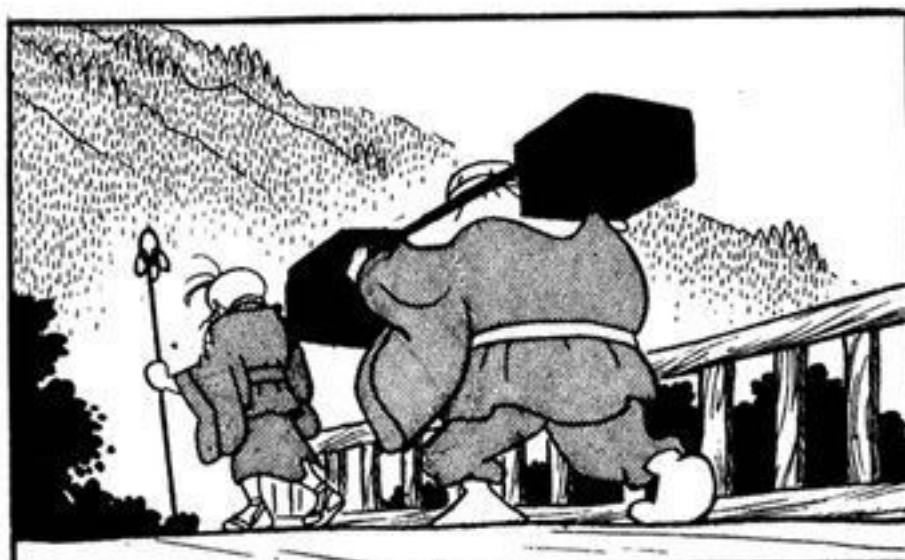
DAMN.

ARRRGH...

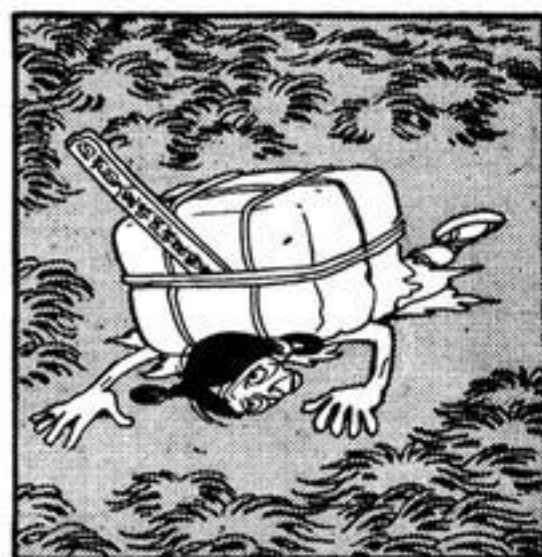
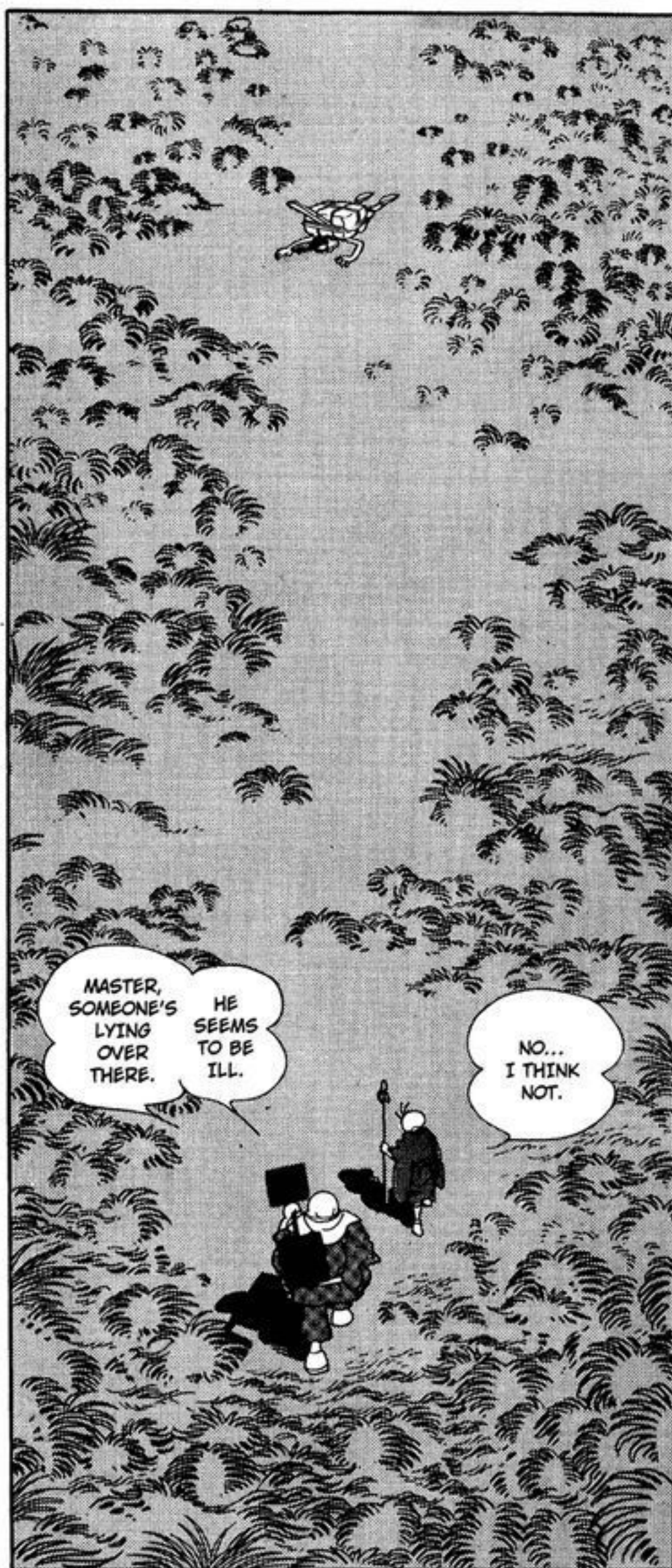








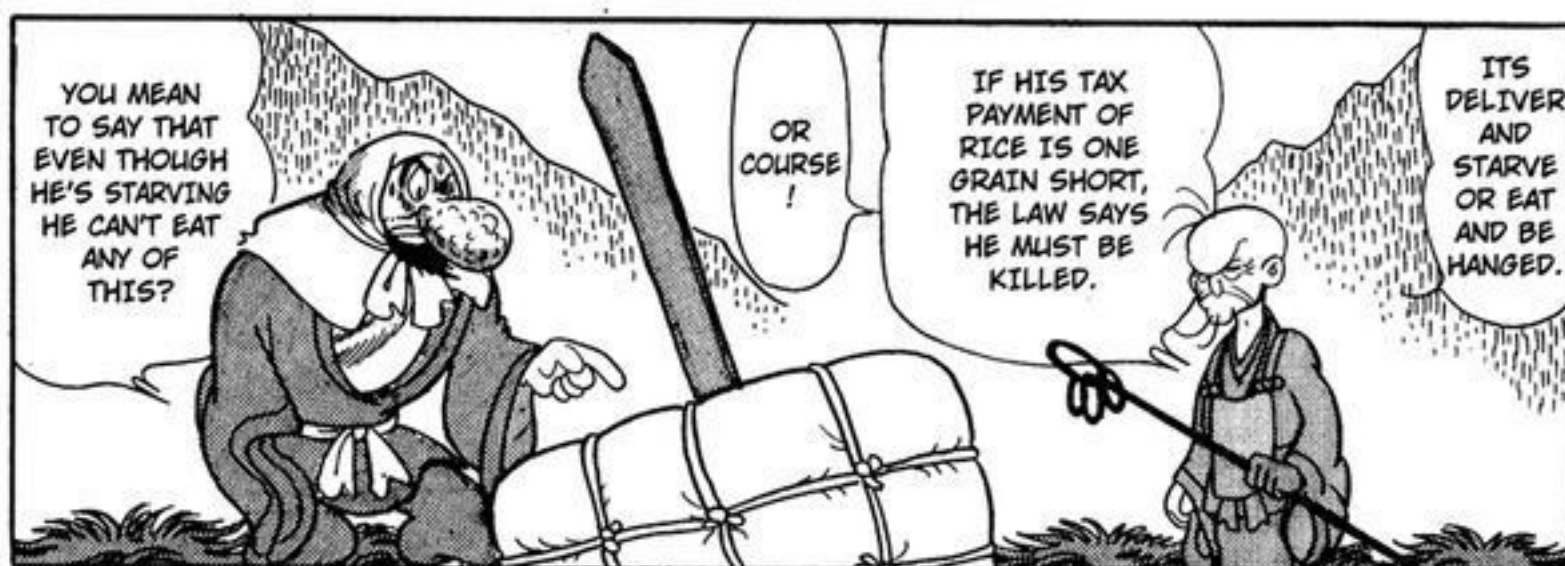






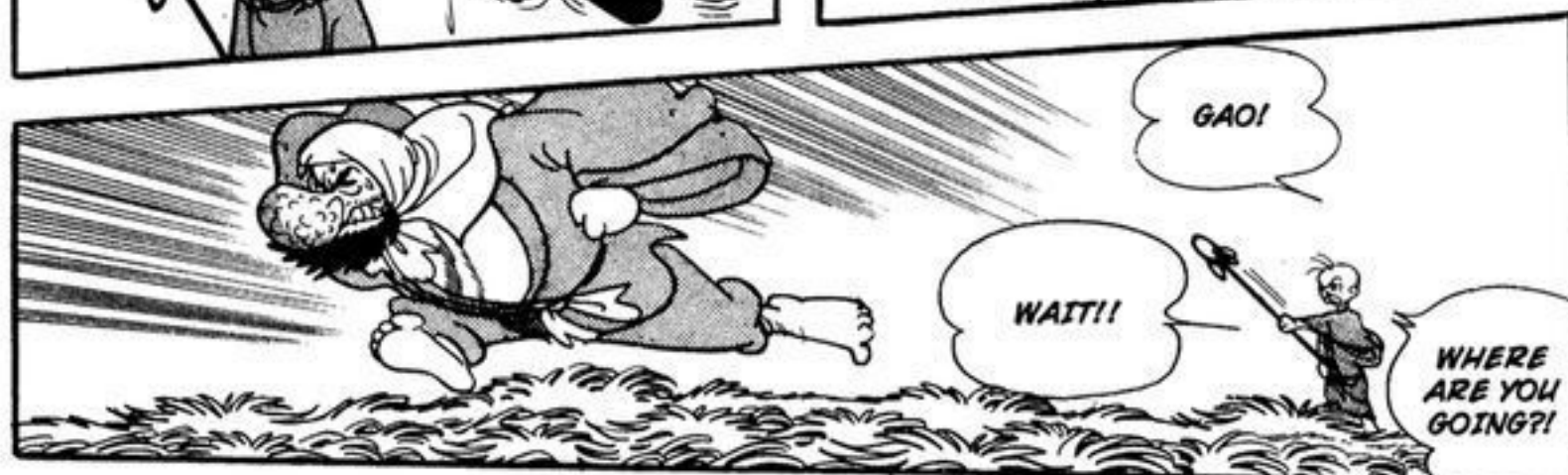




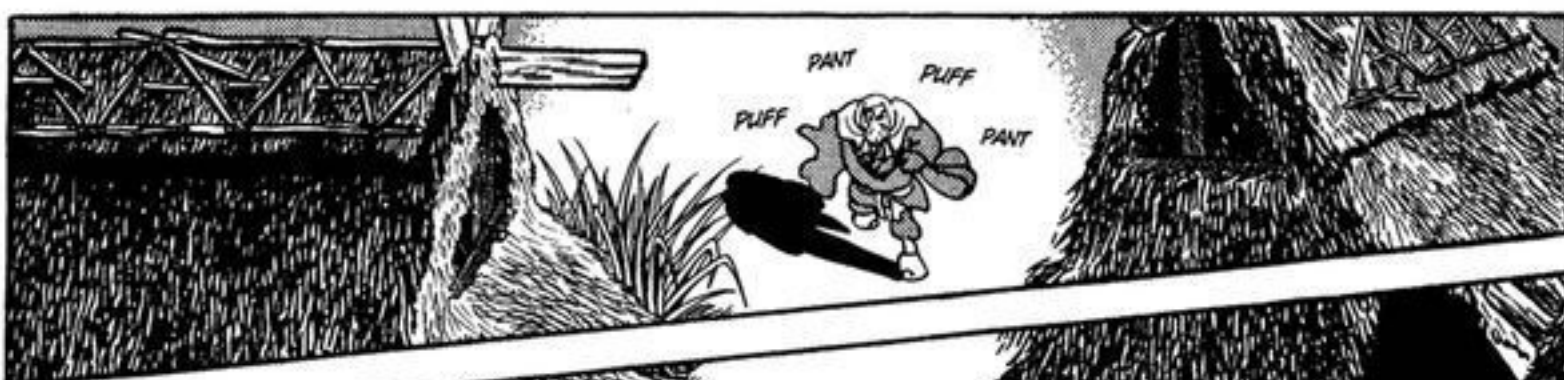
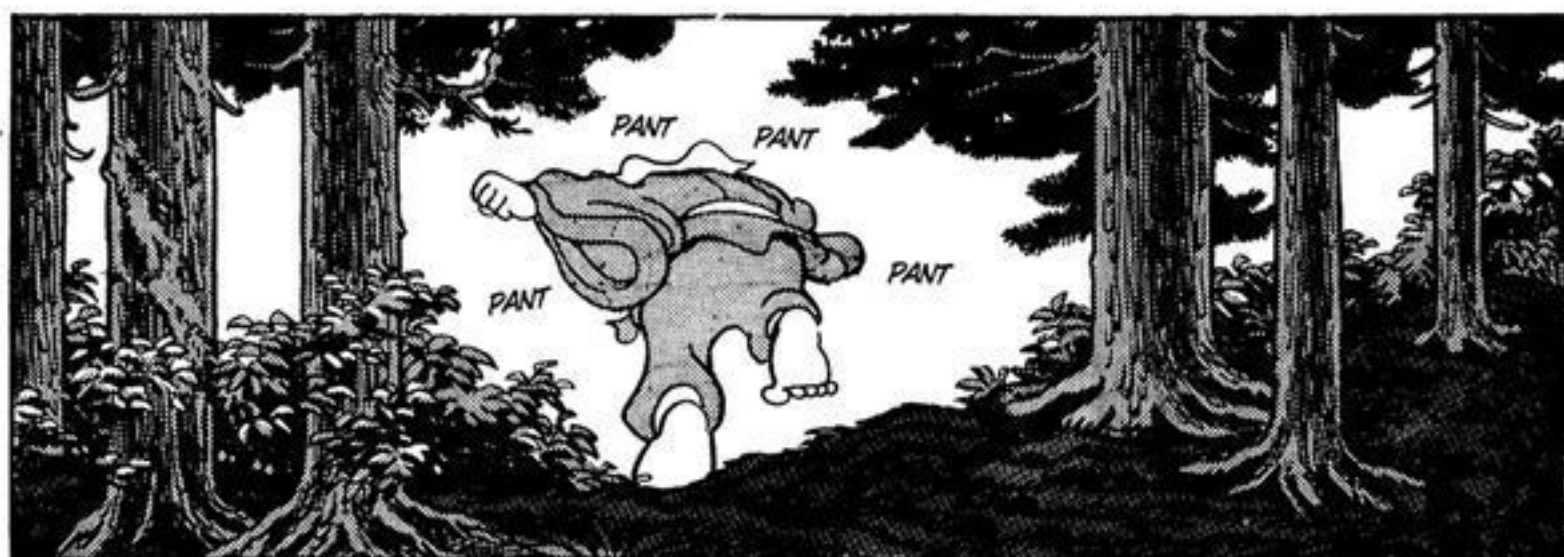


\*IN ATTEMPTING TO MAKE BUDDHISM AN ORGANIZED STATE RELIGION, EMPEROR SHOMU (REIGNED 724-749) ORDERED BUDDHIST MONASTERIES AND NUNNERIES TO BE BUILT THROUGHOUT THE LAND IN 741. EACH ONE WAS CALLED "KOKUBUNJI" OR "NATIONAL BRANCH TEMPLE".





















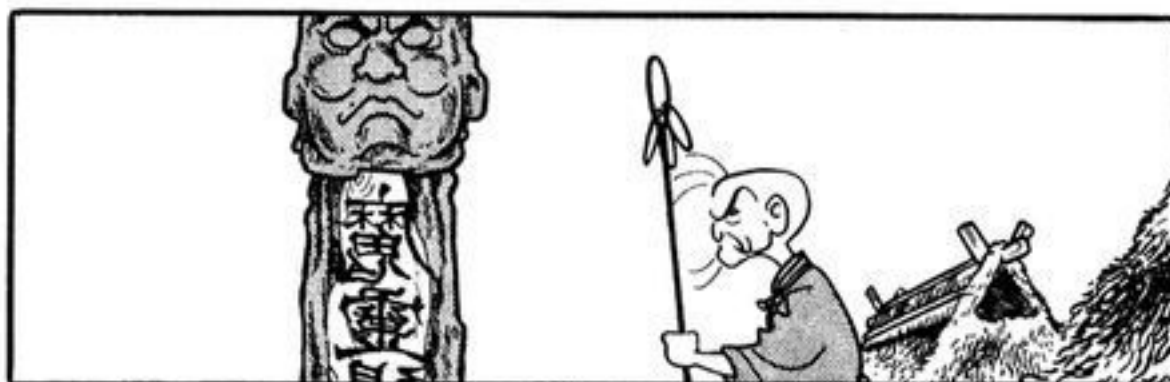




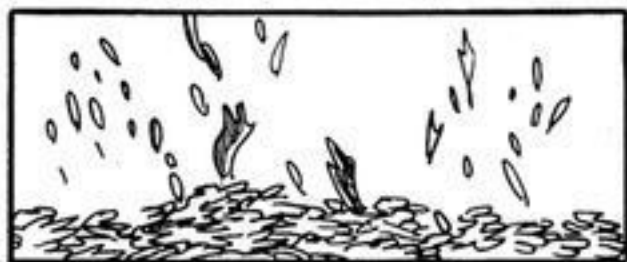
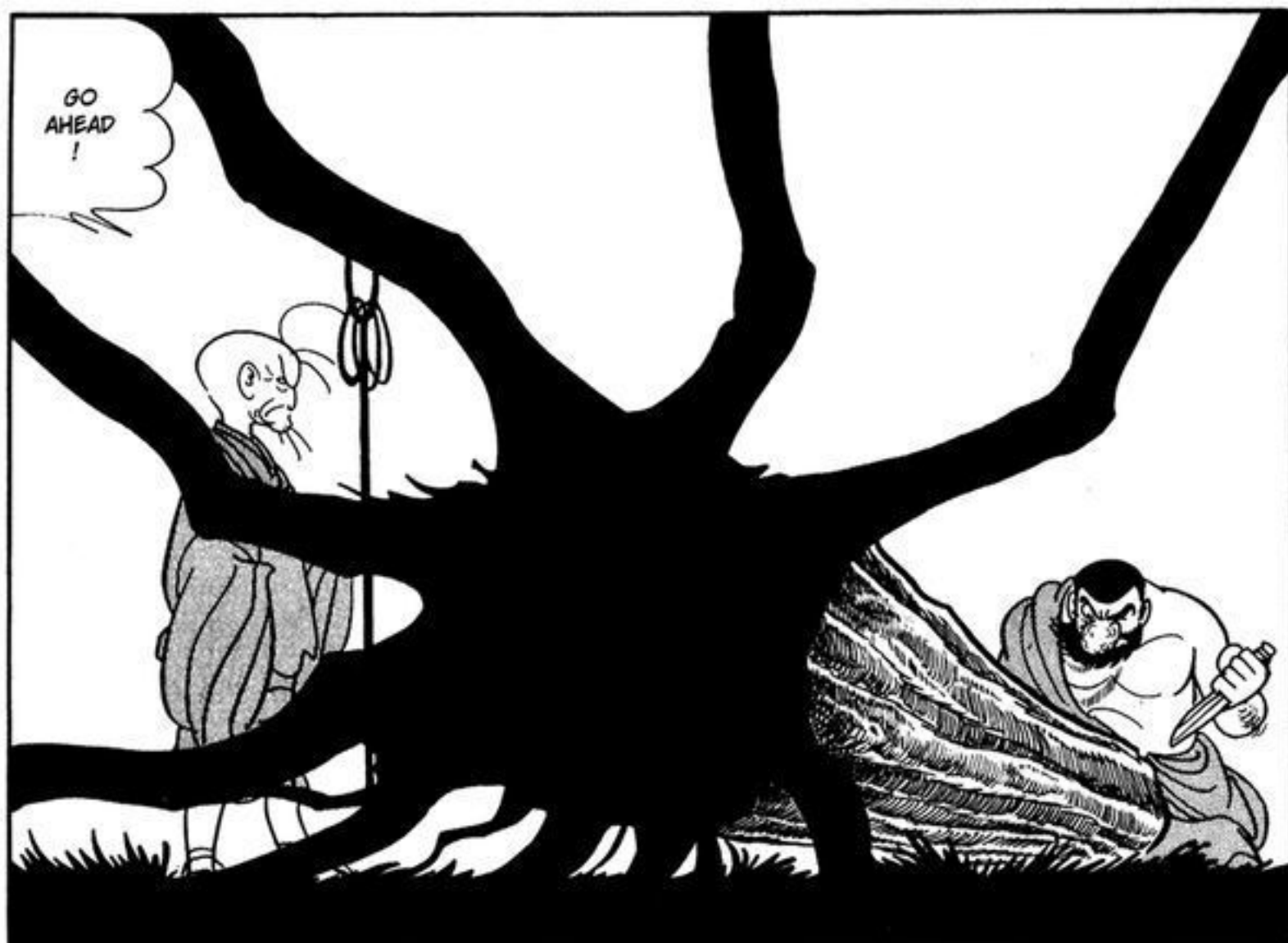




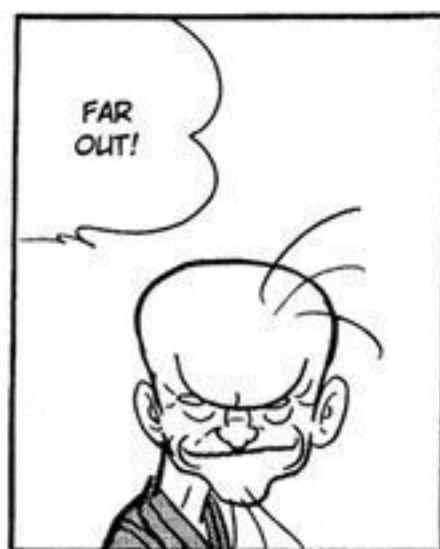
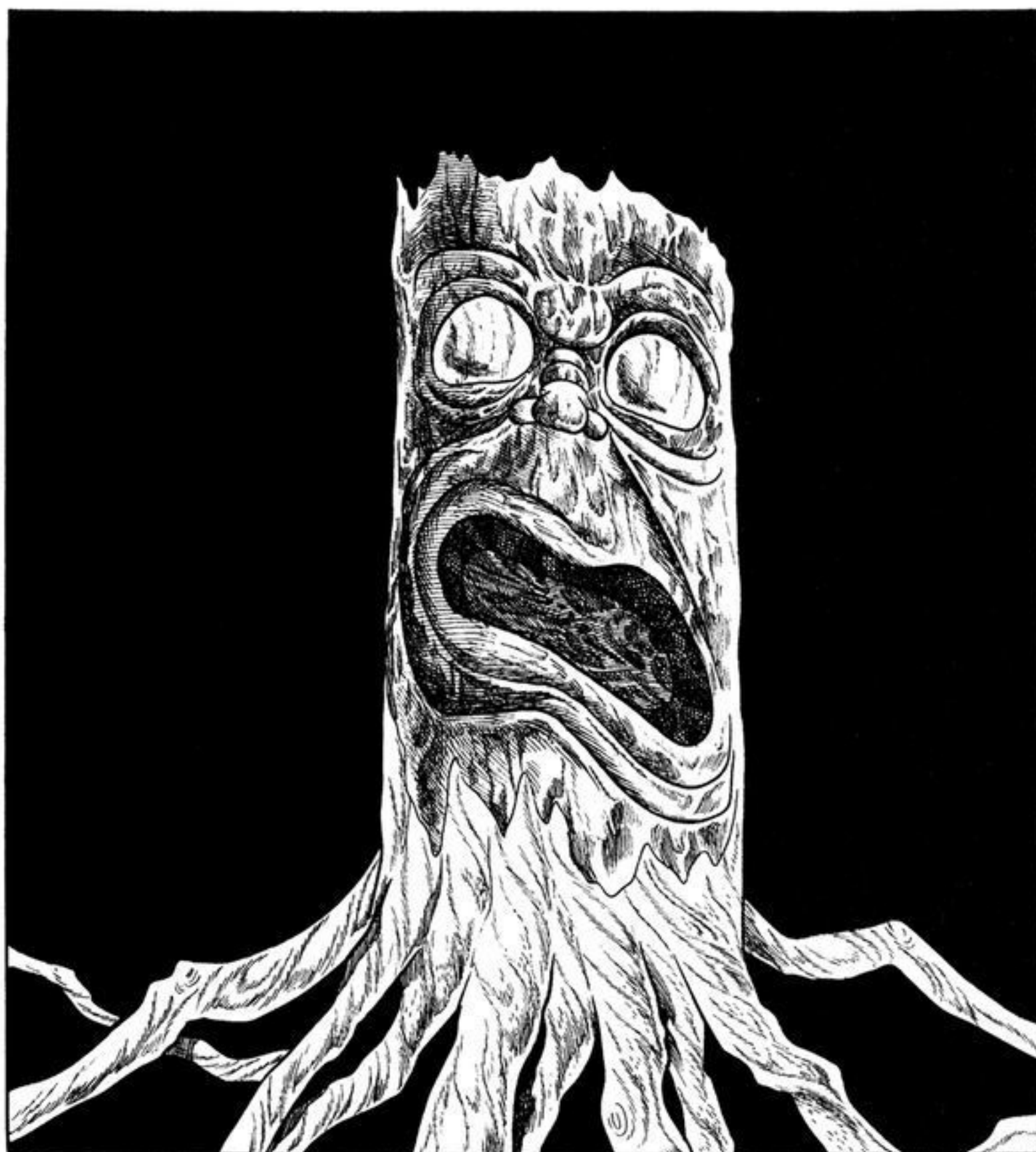




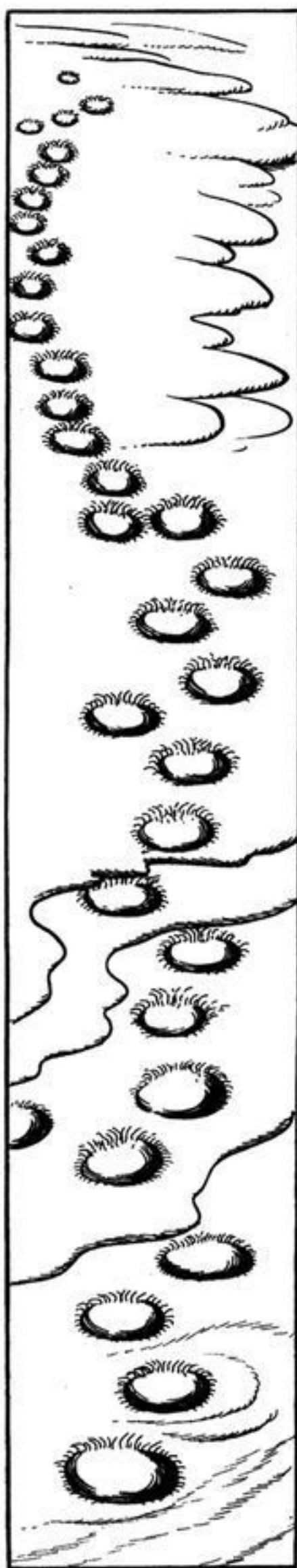




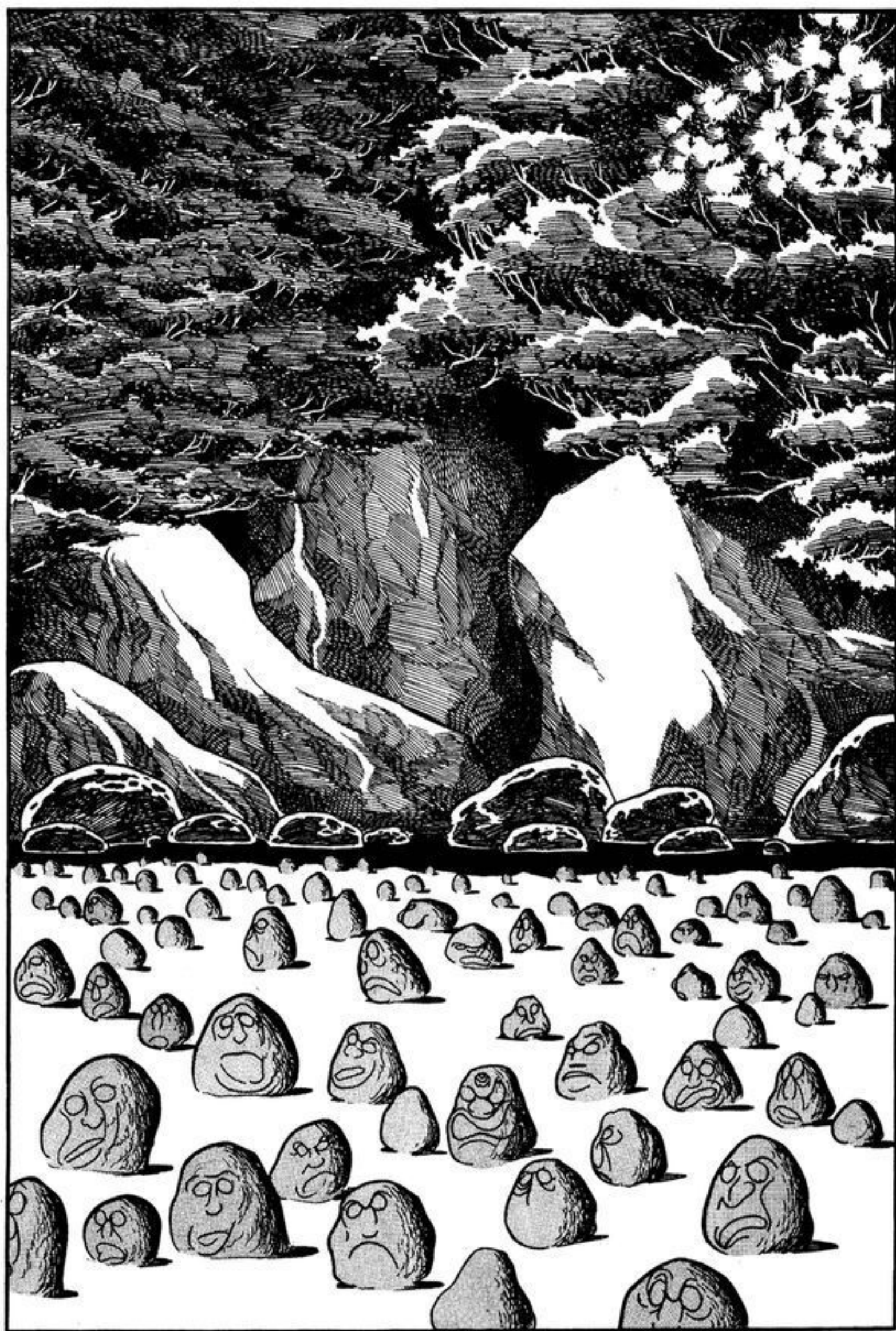




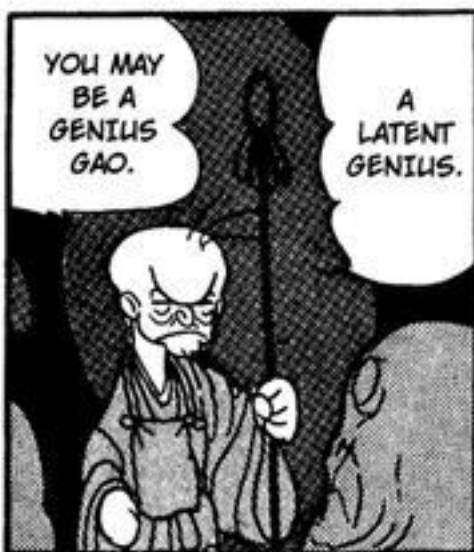
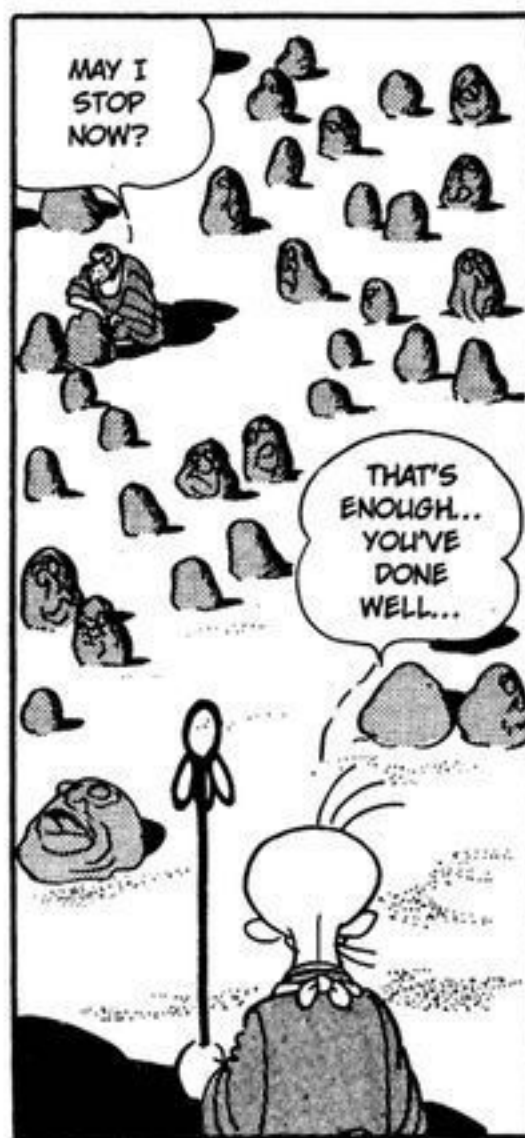








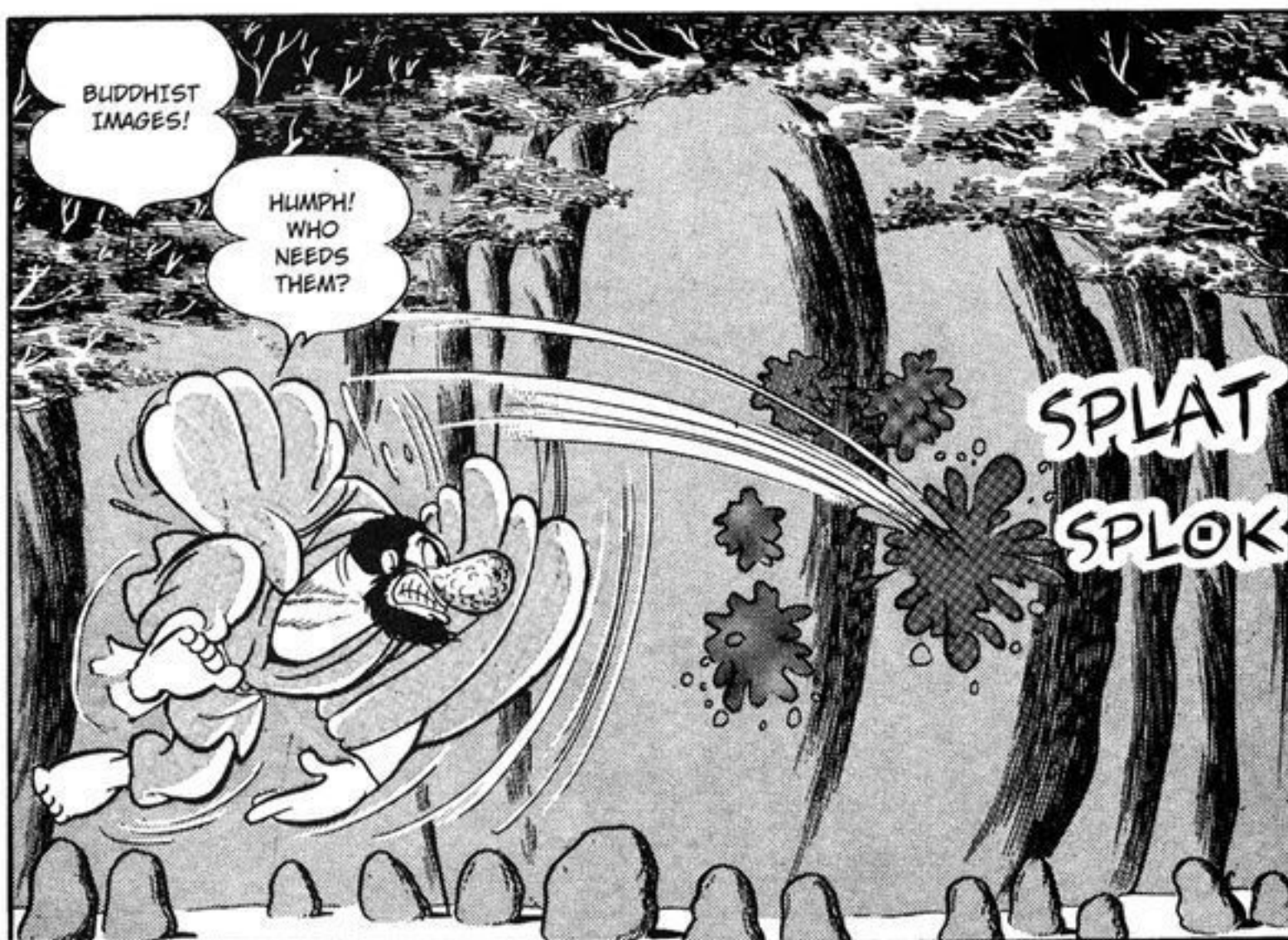




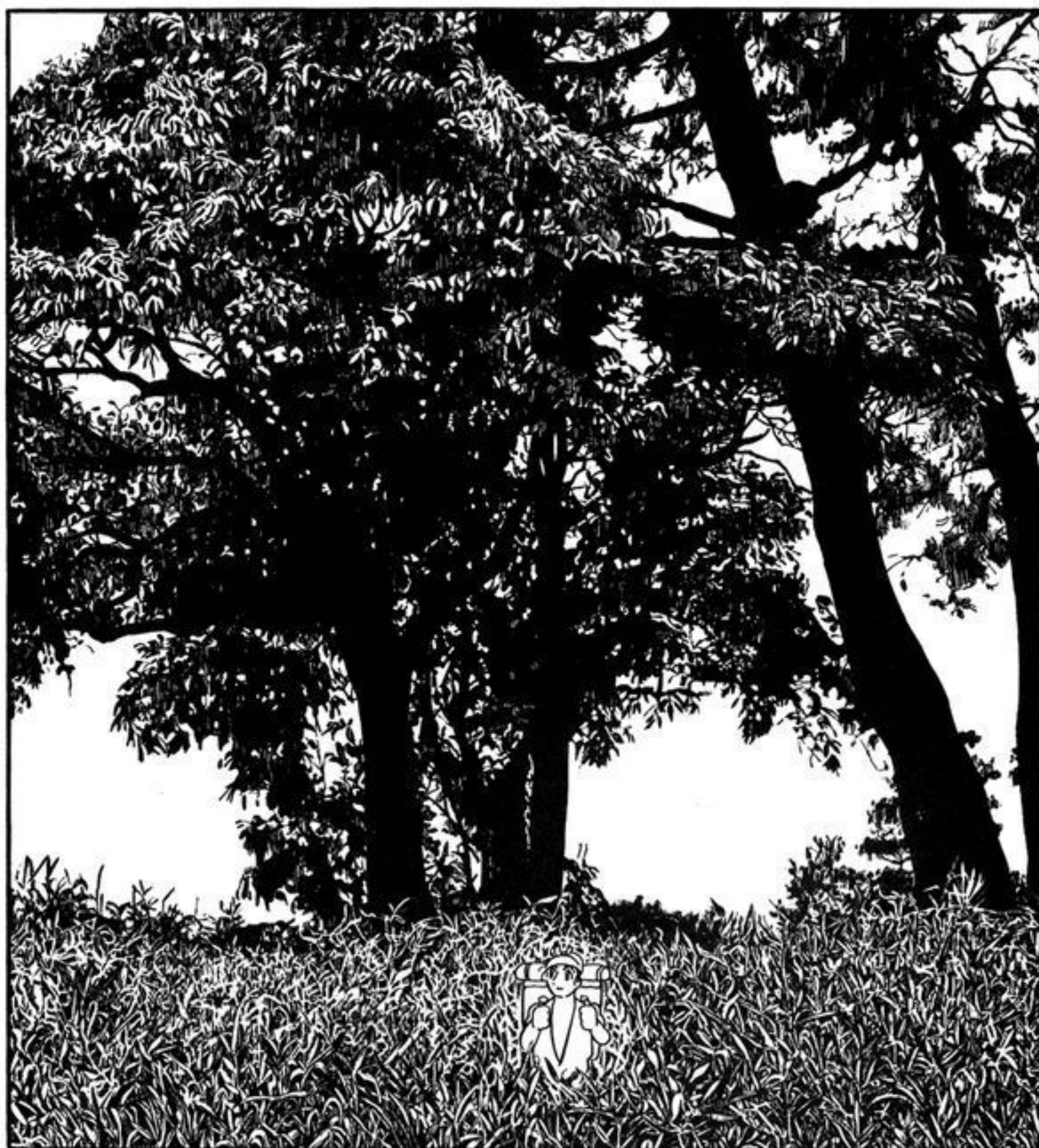








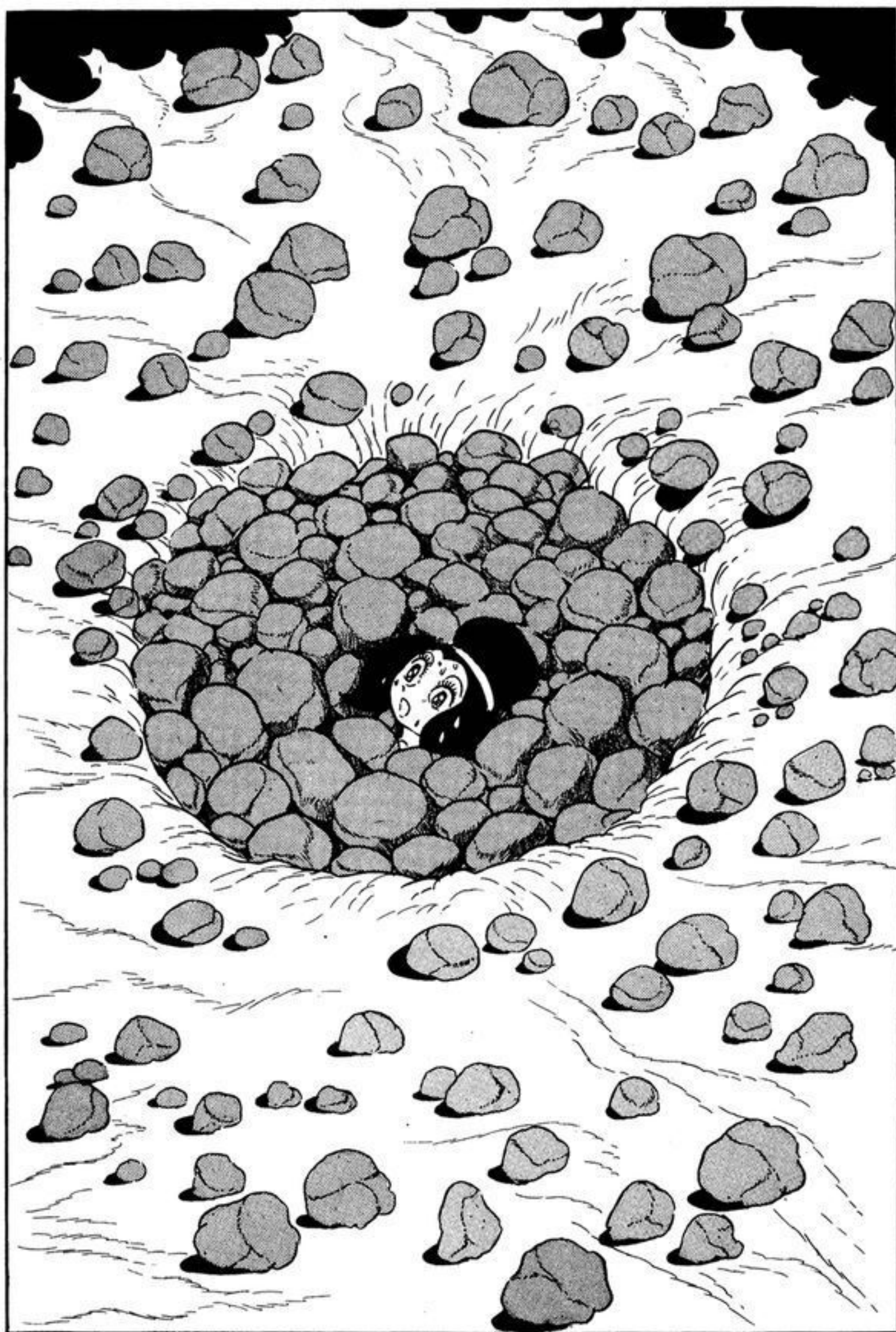




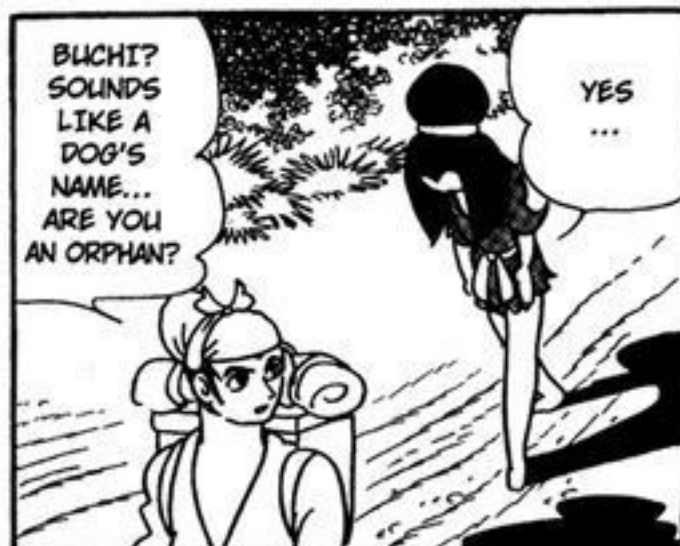




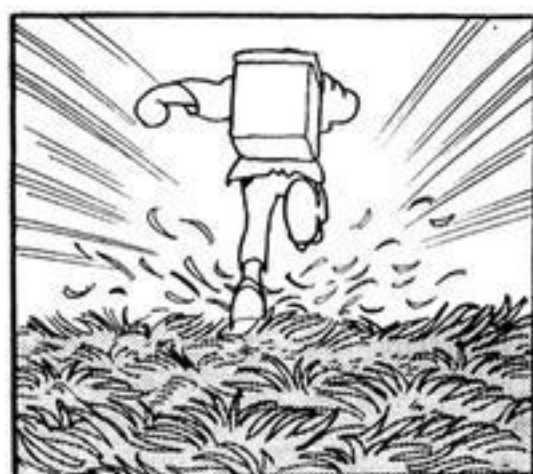




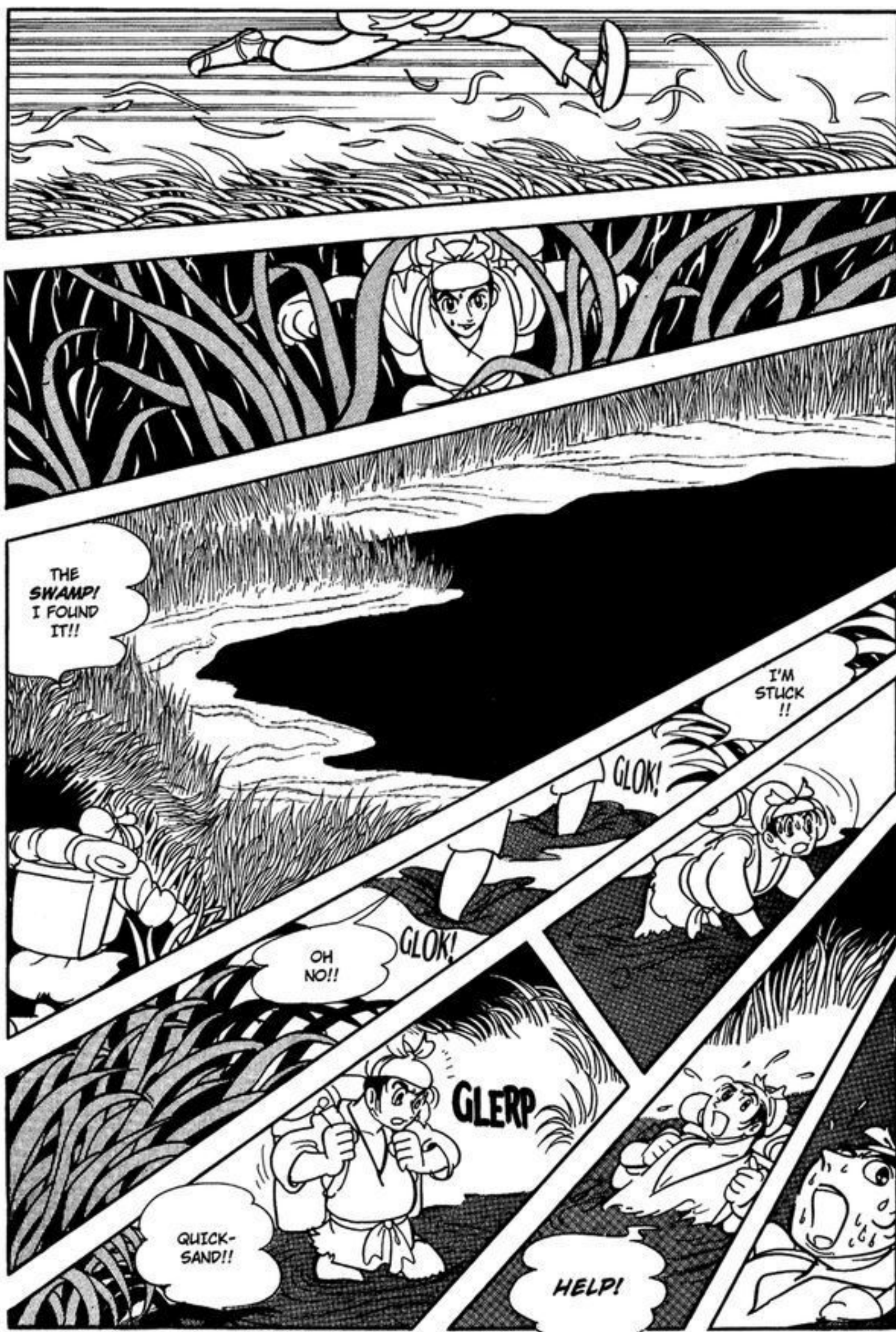




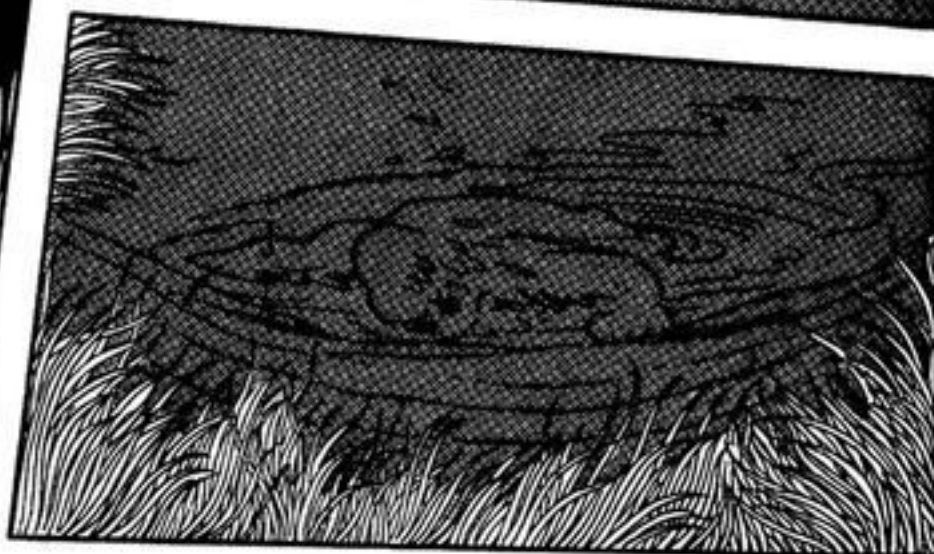
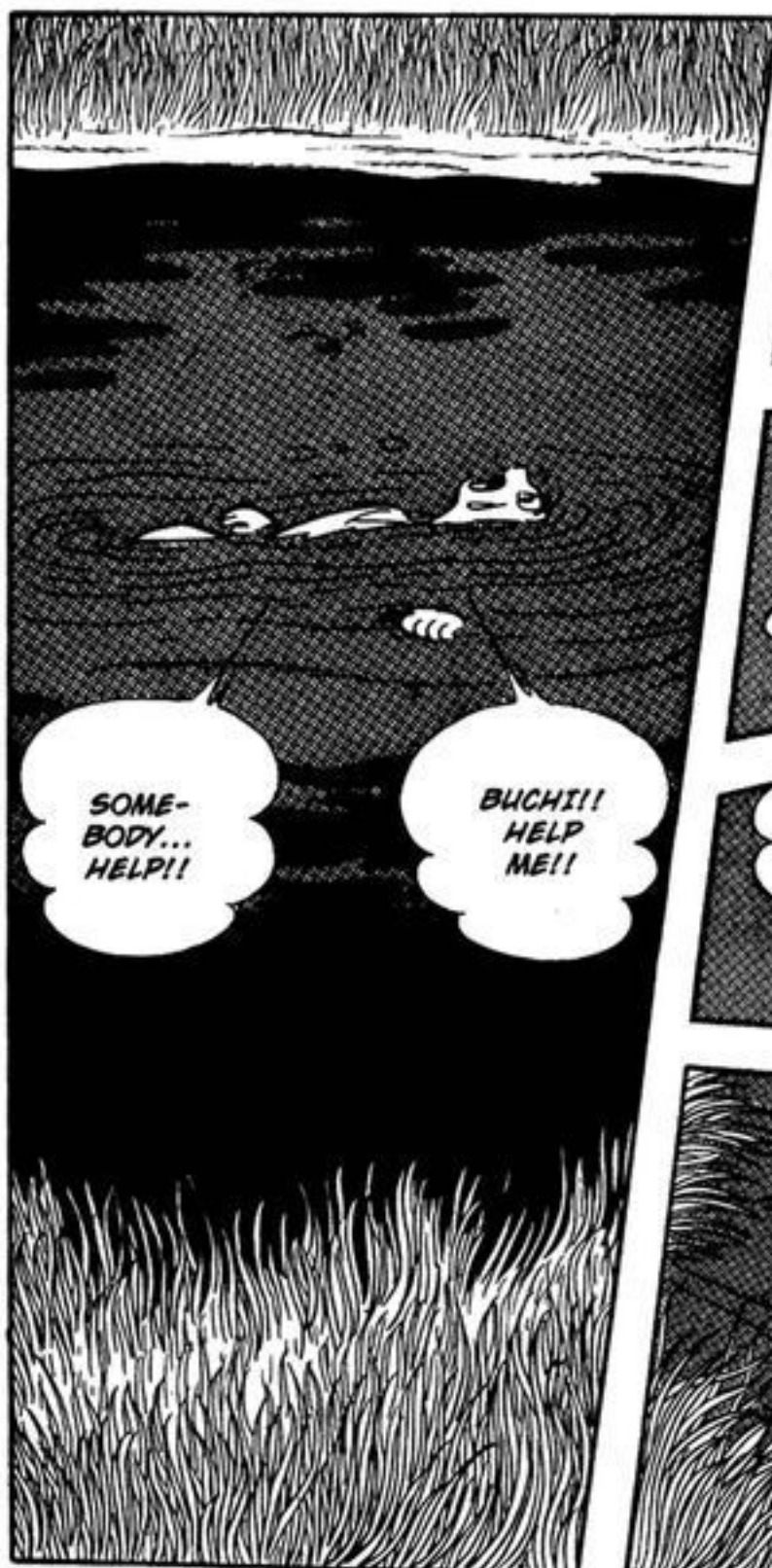




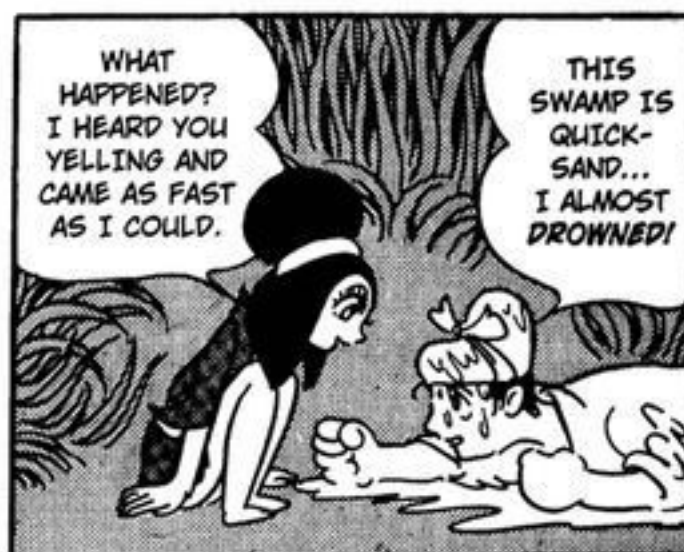




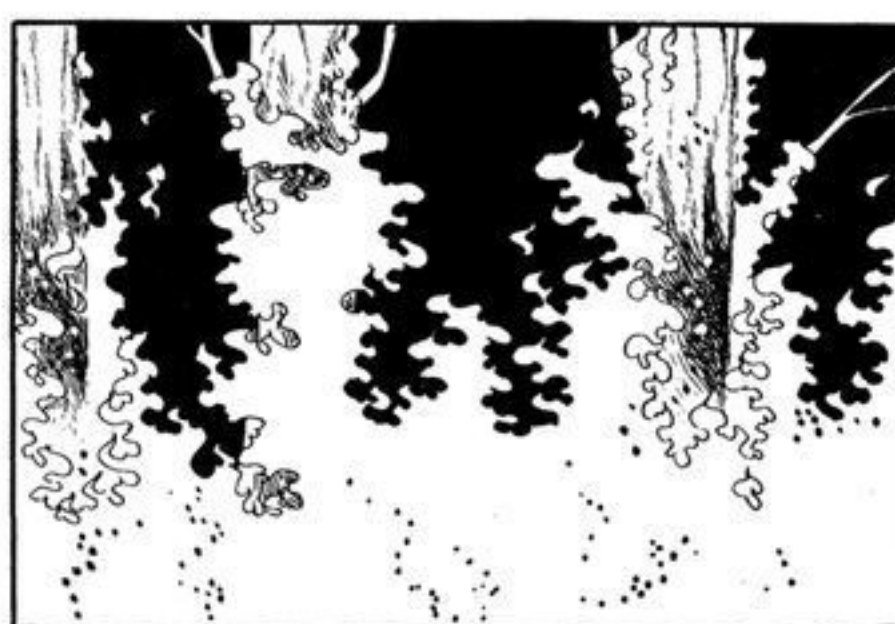




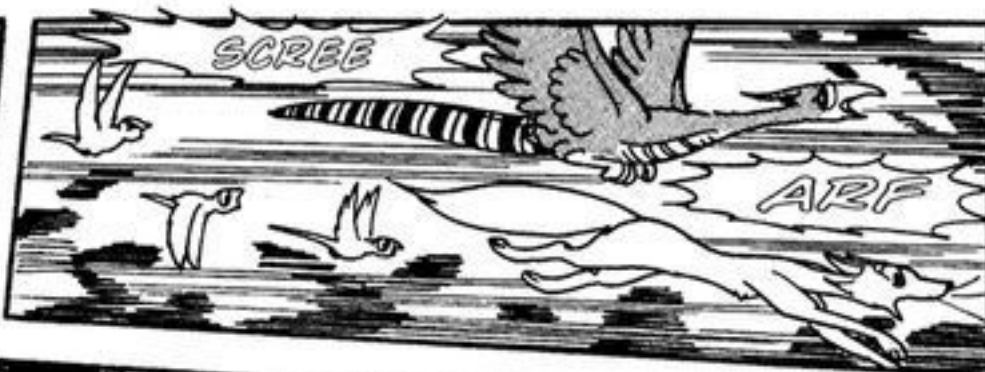












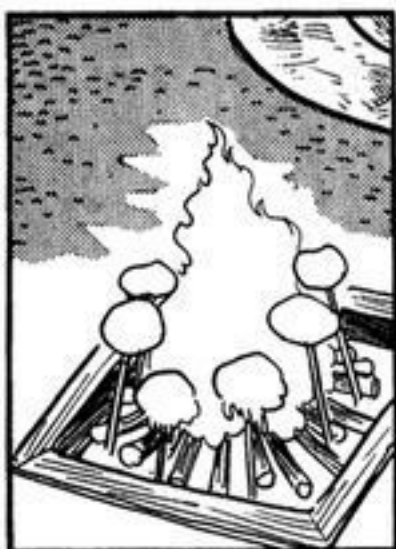




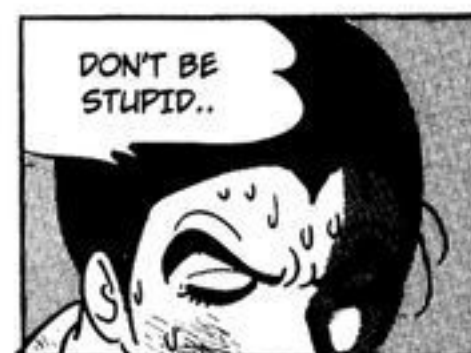




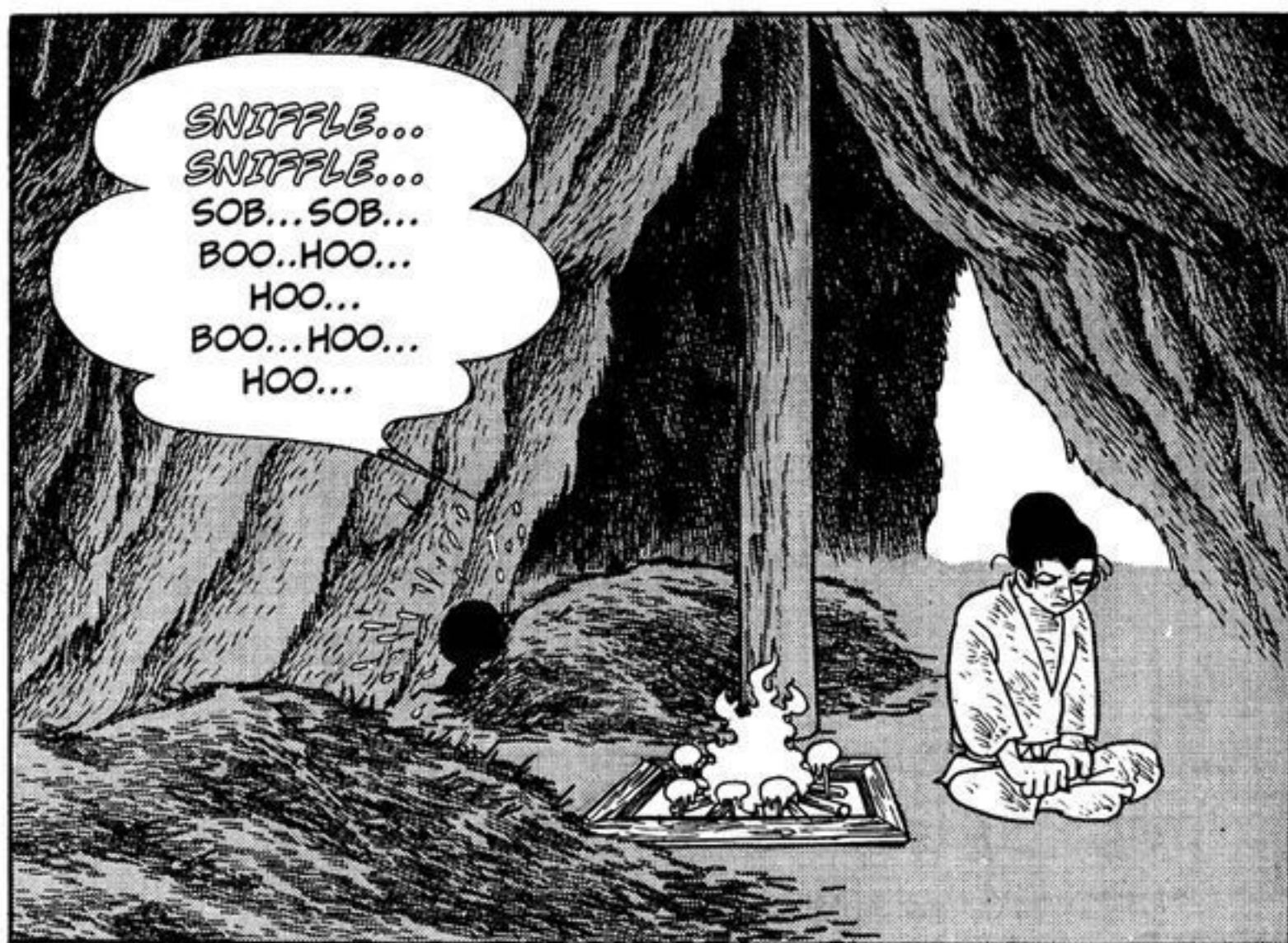






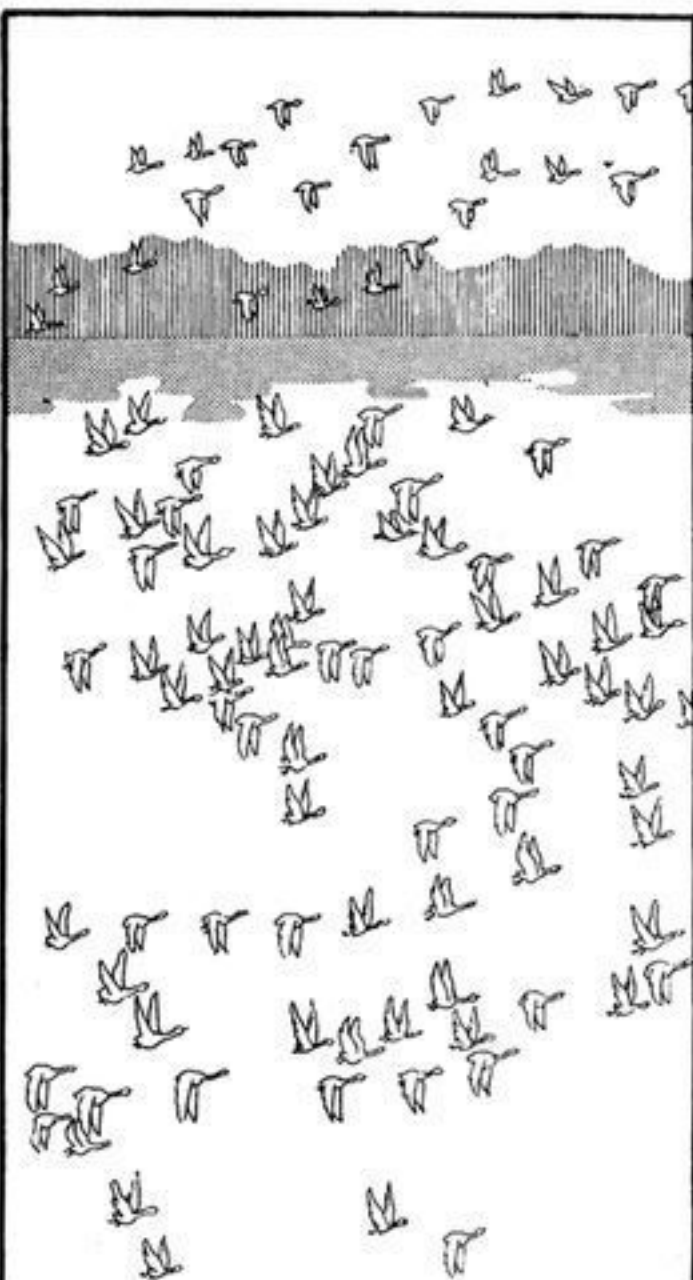




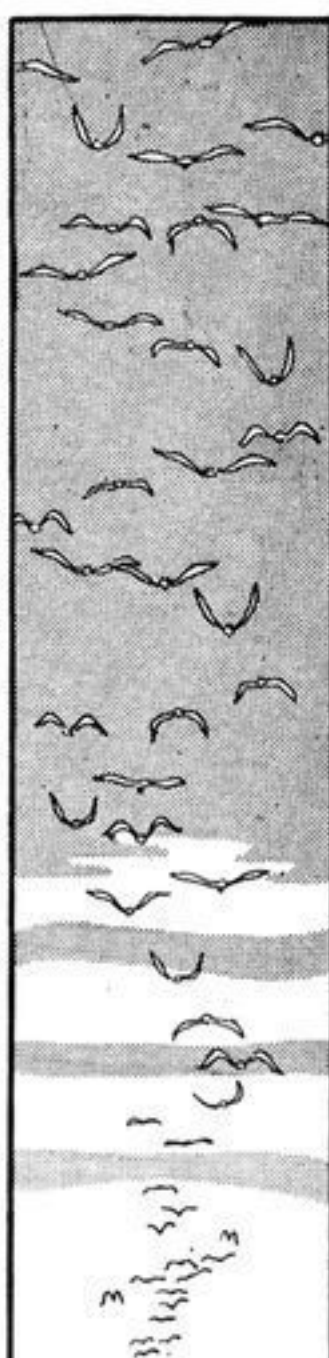
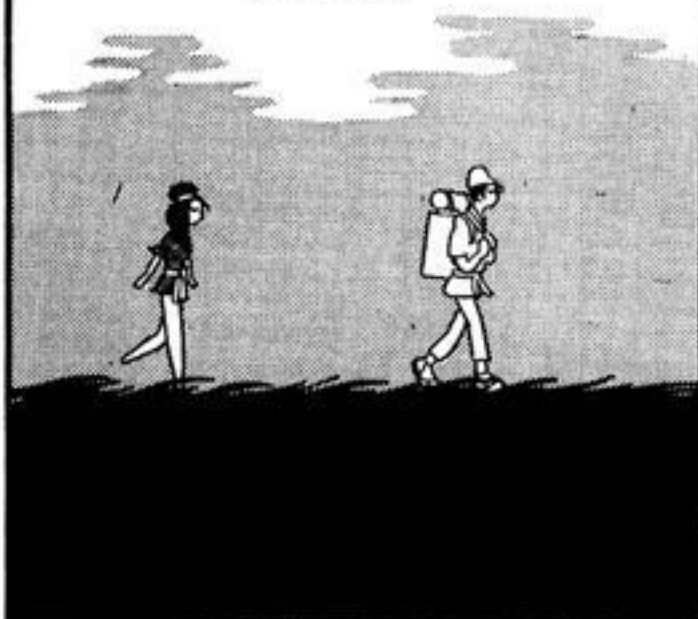




SUMMER  
PASSED.  
THEN  
AUTUMN,  
AND  
WINTER.



THE  
SECOND  
YEAR WAS  
FINALLY  
ENDING...  
BUCHI  
CONTINUED  
TO FOLLOW  
AKANEMARU  
LIKE A  
SHADOW.



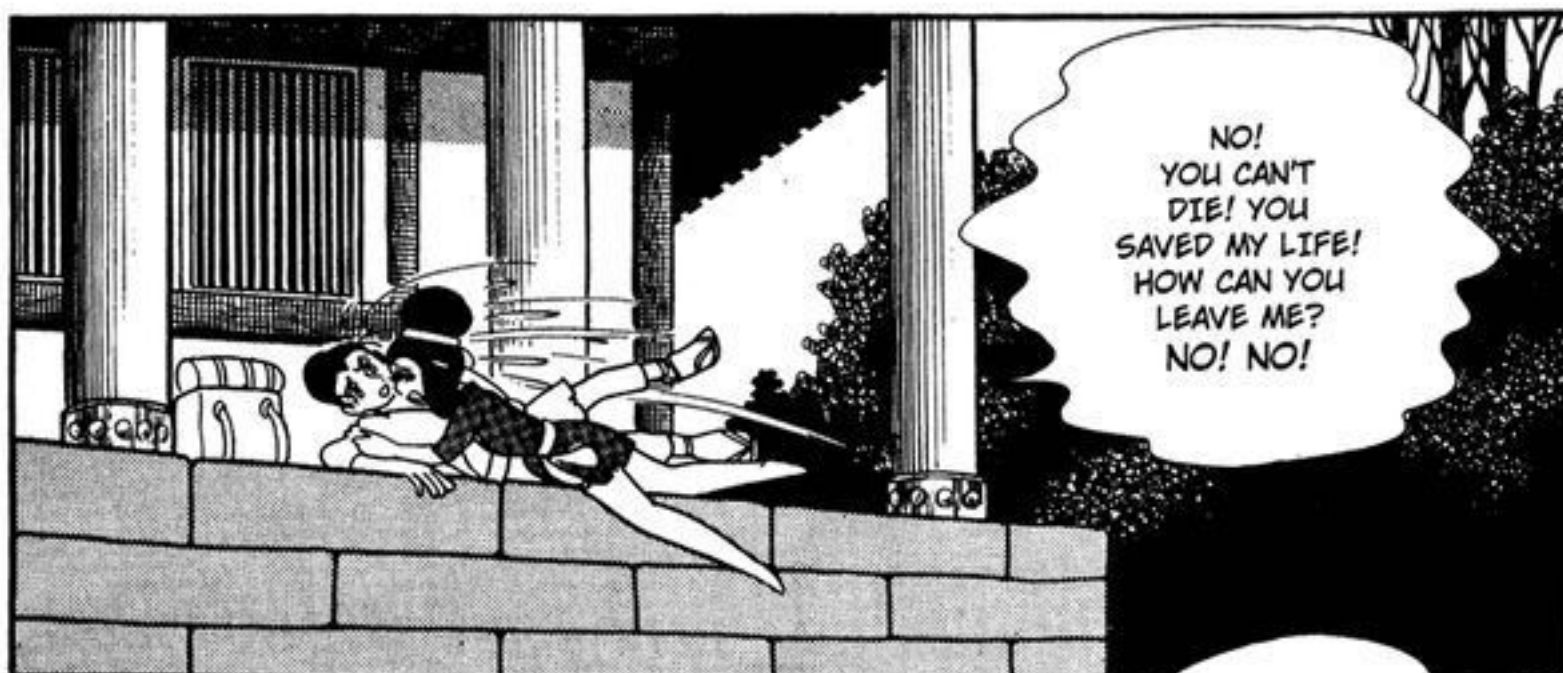
ONE DAY...  
FOR THE  
FIRST TIME  
AKANEMARU  
TOLD BUCHI  
OF HIS  
FATE.











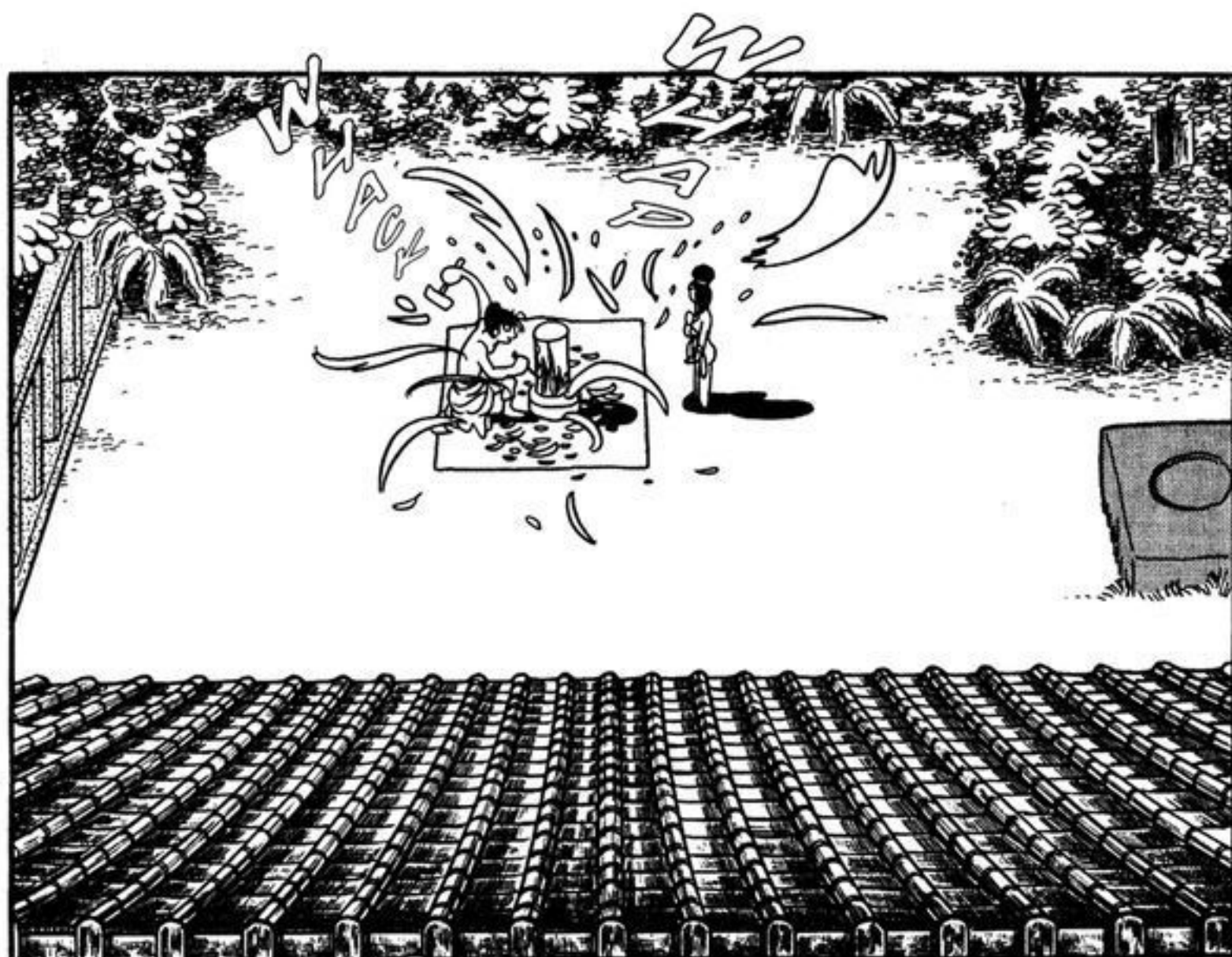












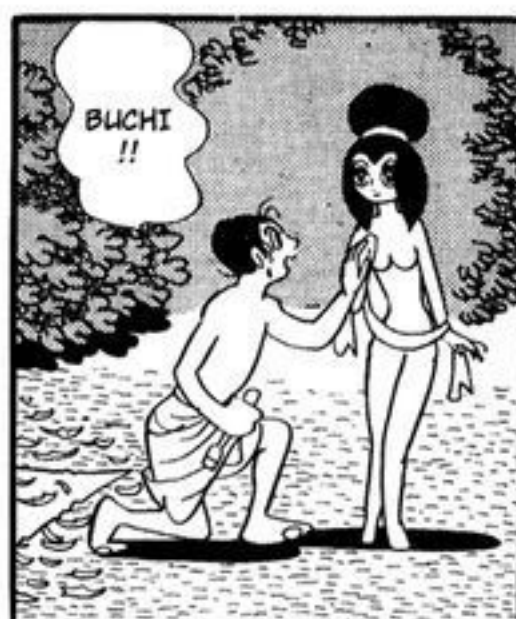












PERHAPS IT WAS A FORM OF SELF HYPNOSIS, OR POSSIBLY IT WAS THE TENSION OF MODELLING FOR THE MOST FAMOUS SCULPTOR IN THE LAND... SOMEHOW SHE HAD BECOME FROZEN IN HER POSE.







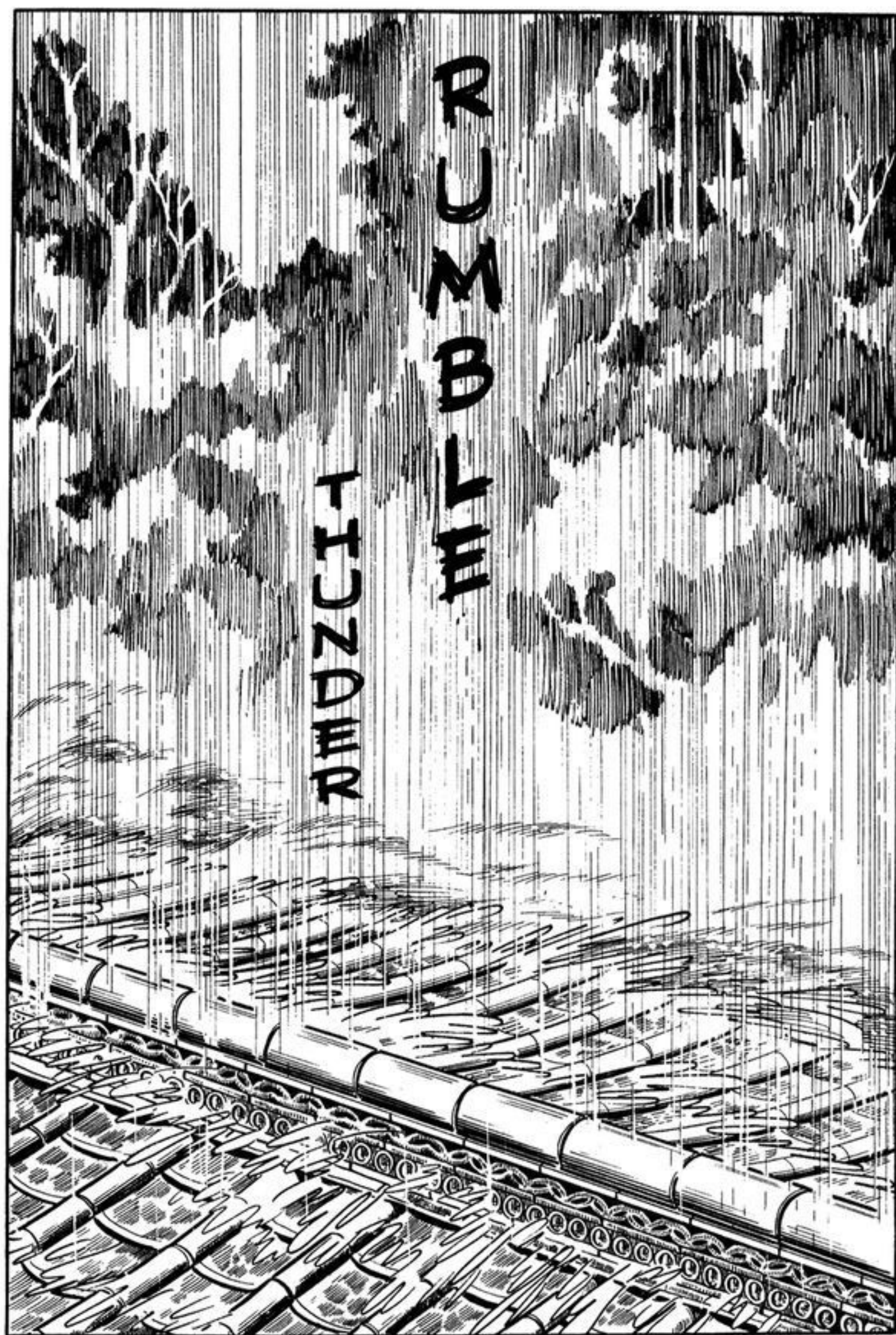




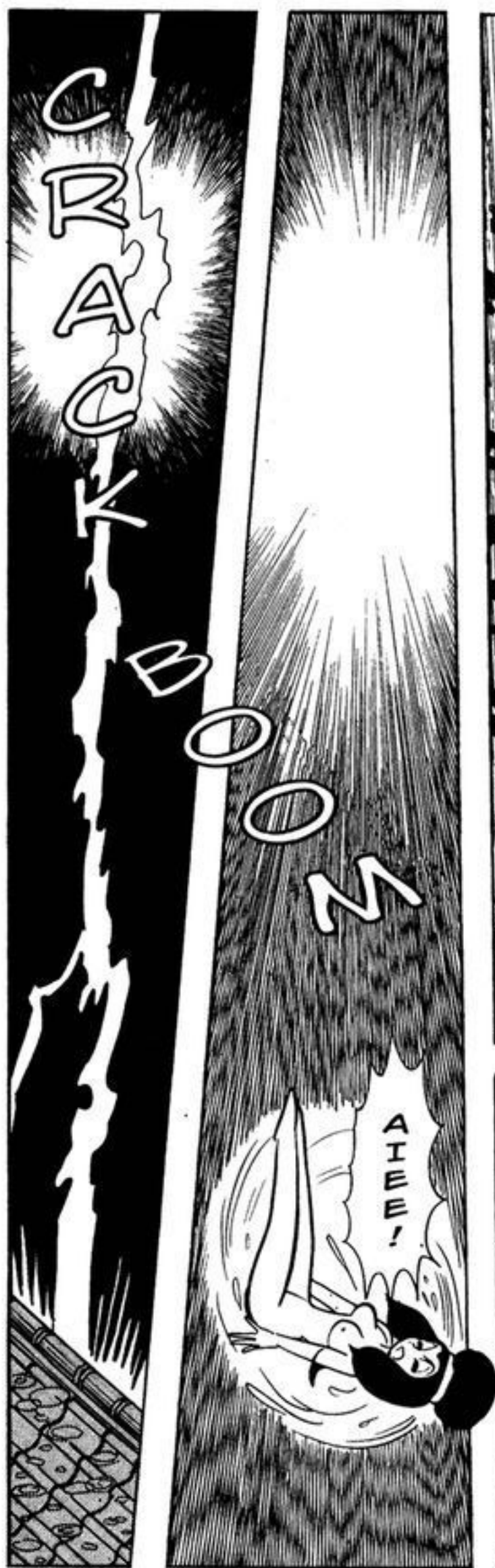








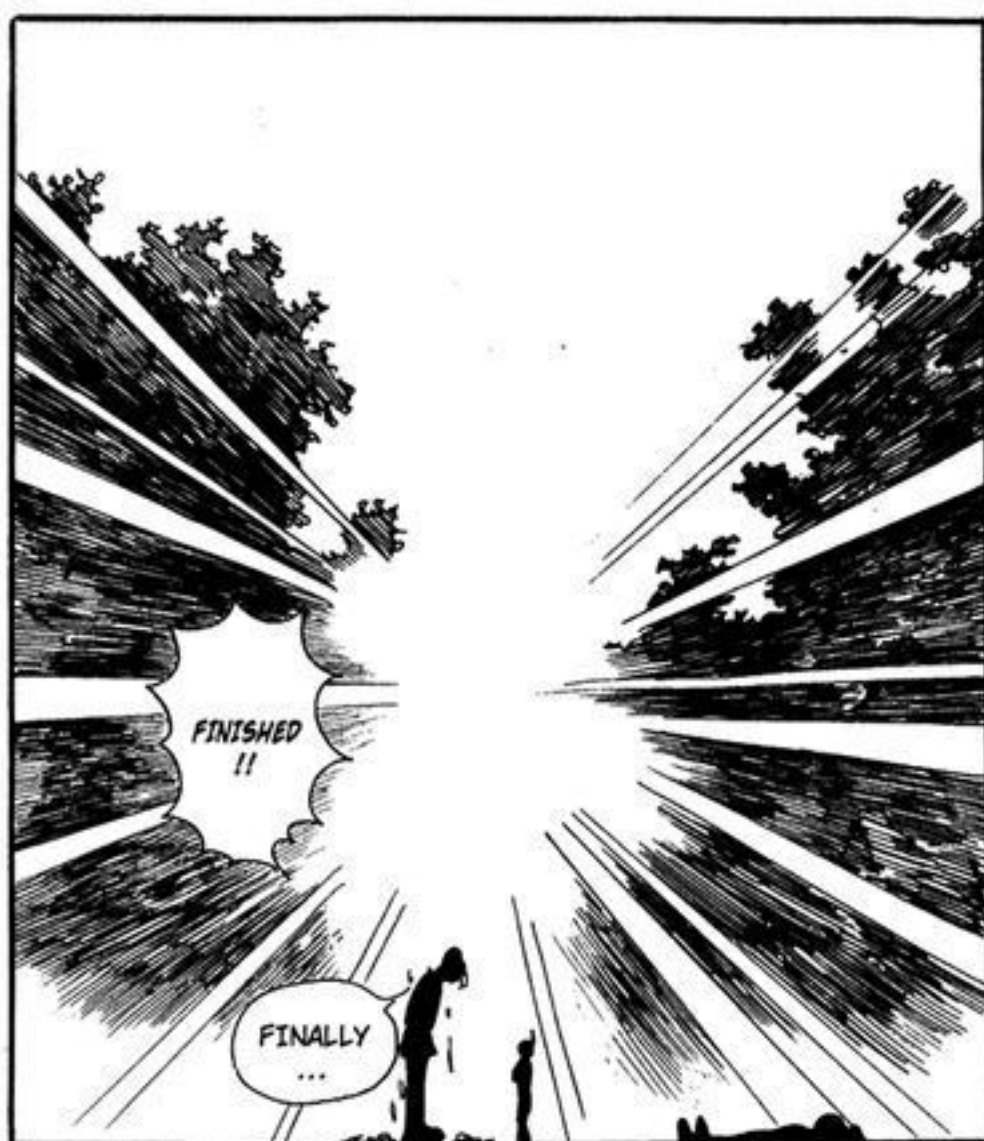
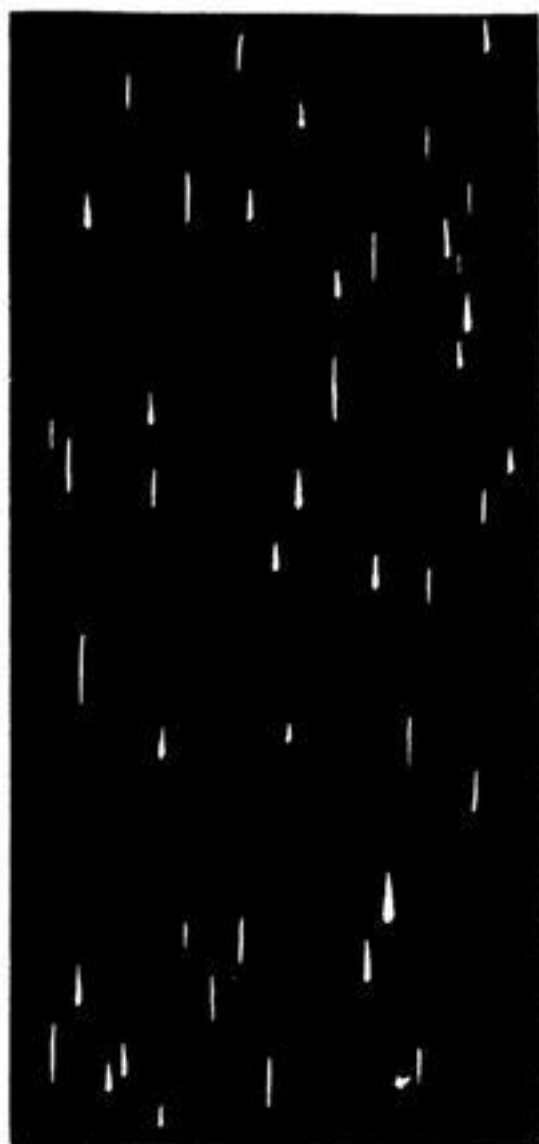




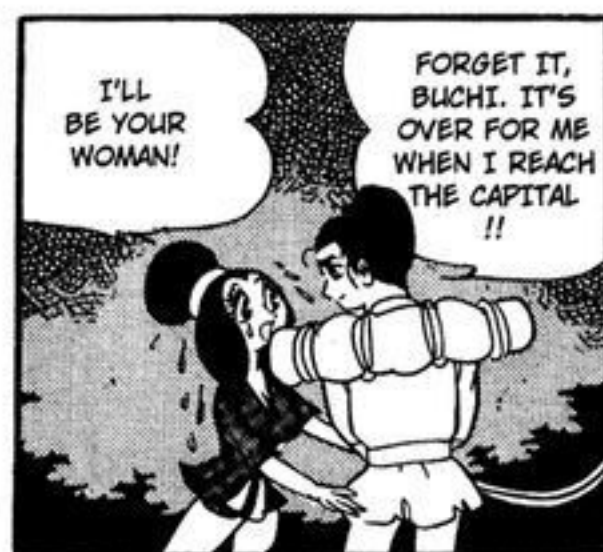




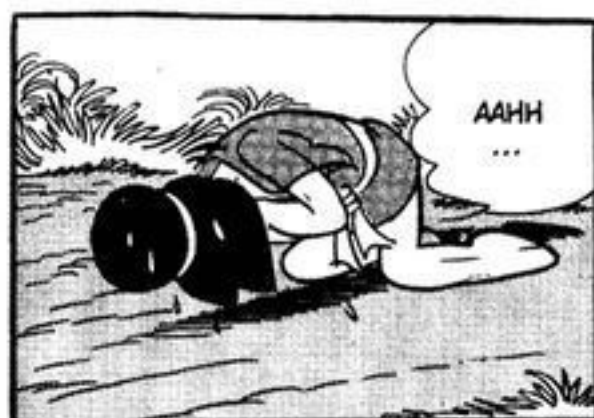
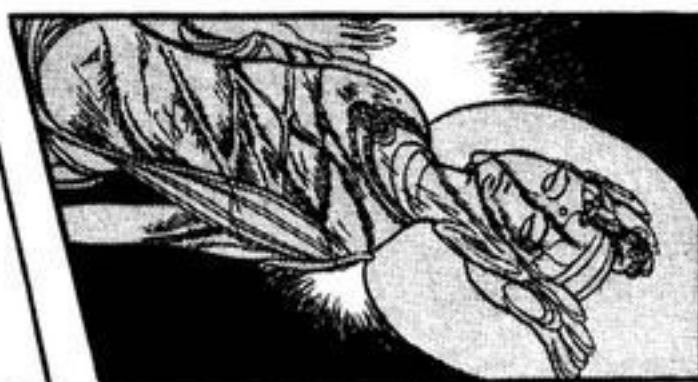




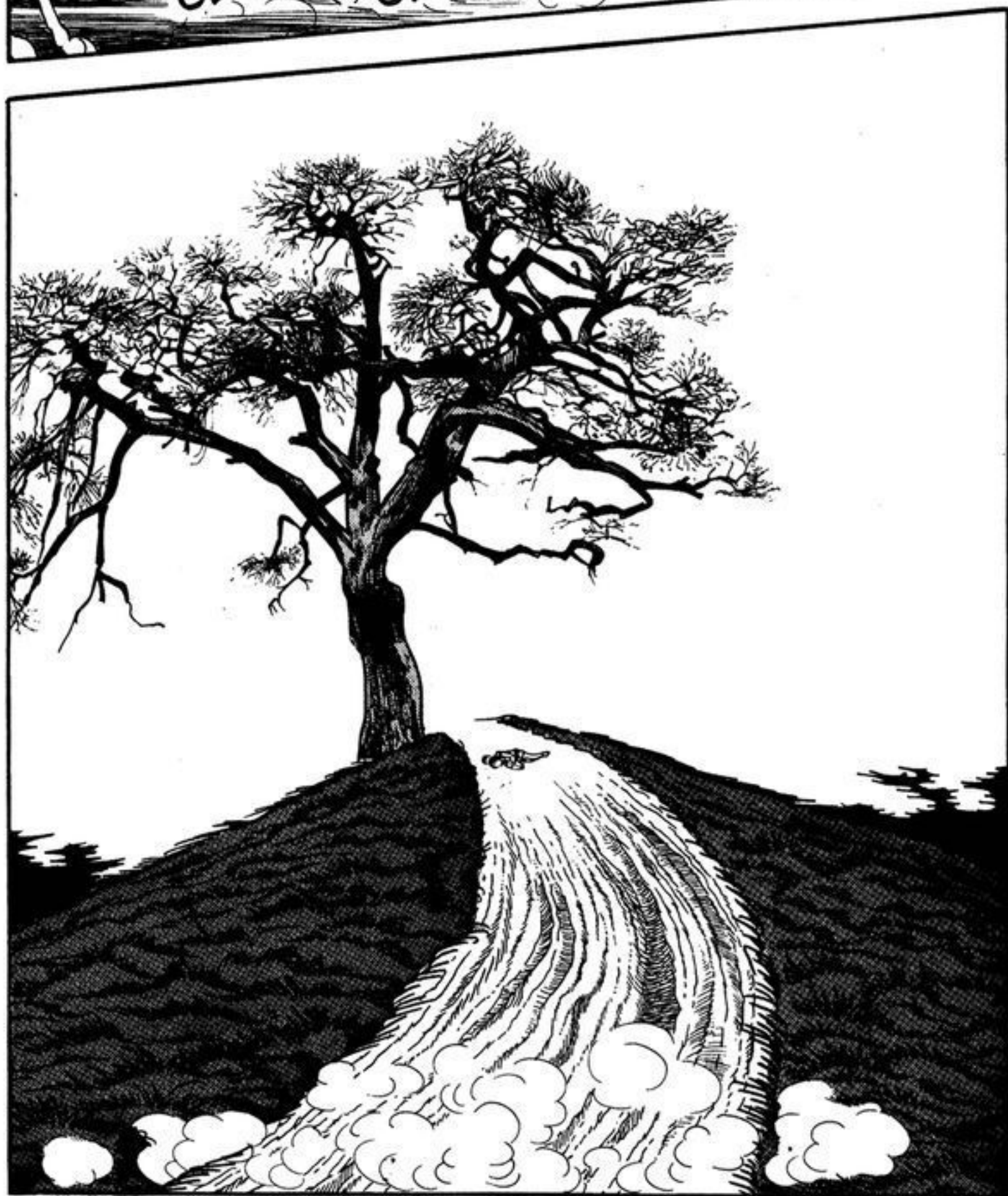












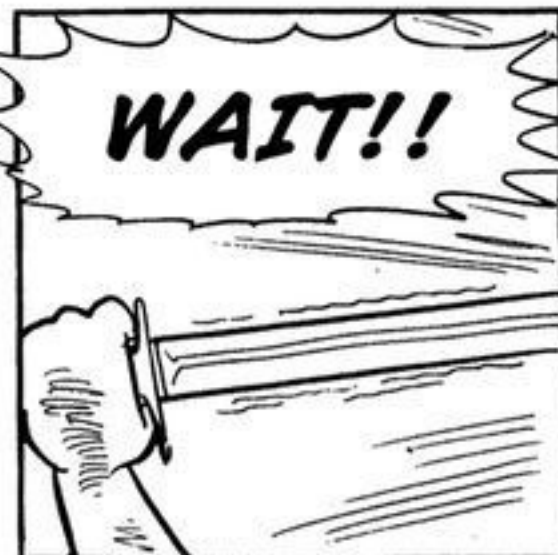








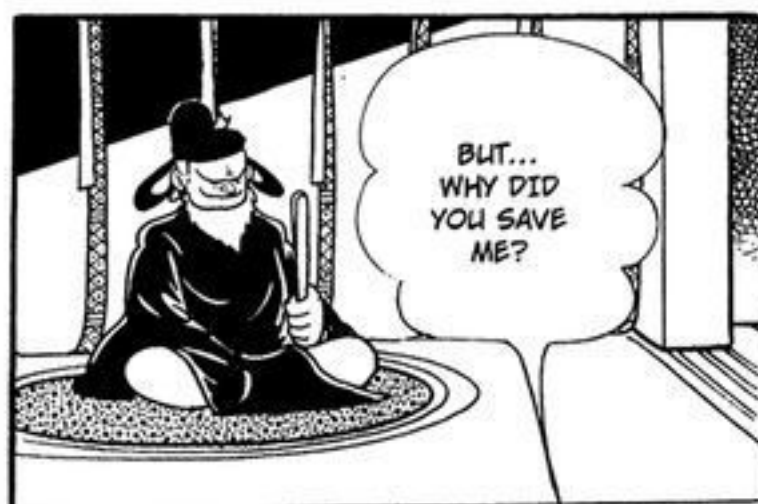














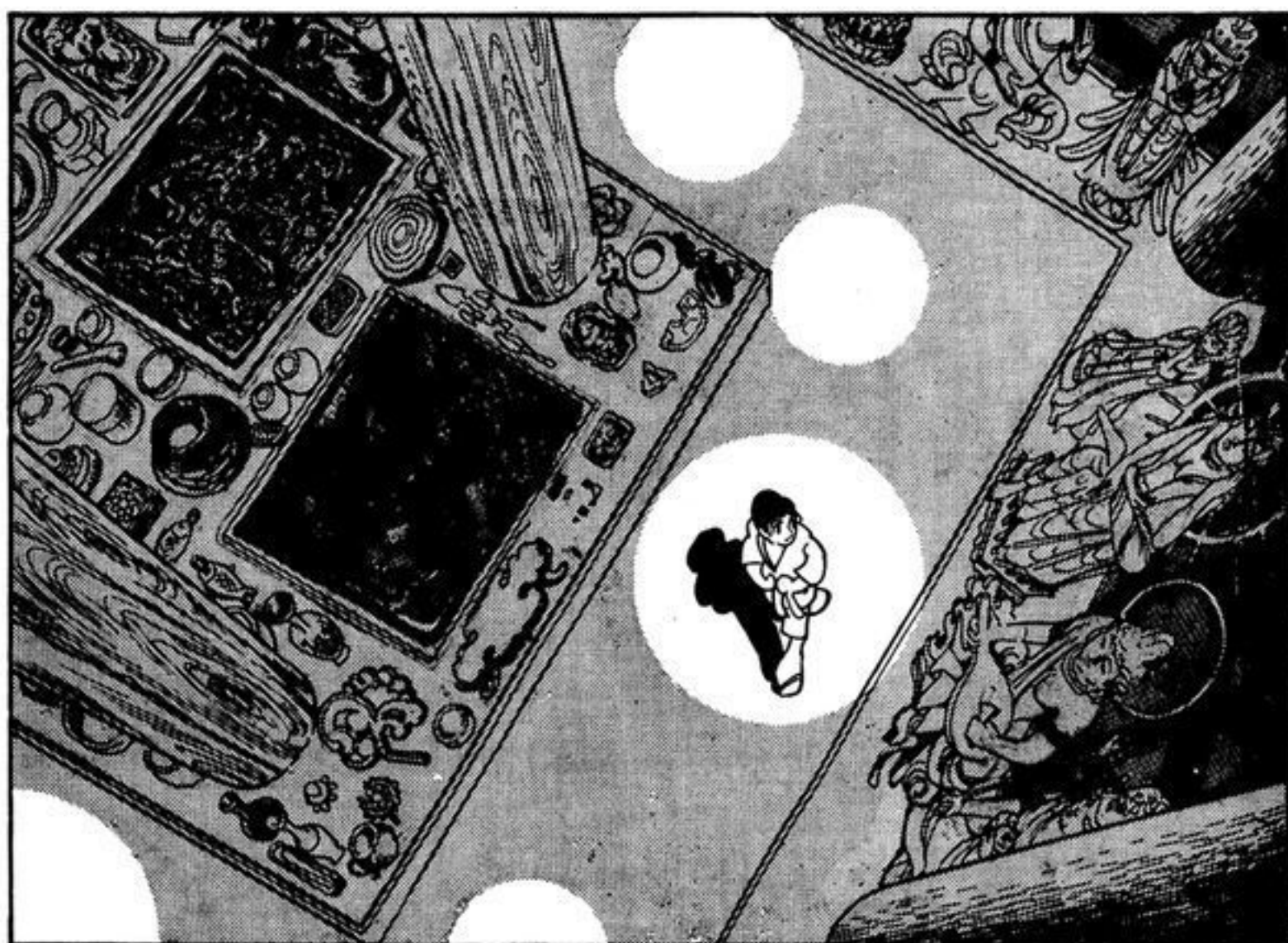


\*SHOSOIN: THE IMPERIAL TREASURE HOUSE WHICH STORES ART, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, AND LITENSILS FROM ANCIENT JAPAN, KOREA, CHINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.













NOW I KNOW I MUST  
SEE THE BIRD WITH MY  
OWN EYES... I'LL TRAVEL  
TO THE LAND OF THE TANG  
AND FIND HER IF IT'S  
THE LAST THING I DO!!